

Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

**[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be 'his very own' is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram whom even Lord Shiva had revered and worshipped. And surely of course to Lord Hanuman who was a manifestation of Shiva himself. Finding no words to express my profound gratitude to Ram, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

"He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!" [A Hymn by: Joseph Henry Gilmore in 1862.]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author

Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

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Preface

The 'Barvai Ramayan' is a beautiful poetic composition of Goswami Tulsidas which narrates the story of Lord Ram, regarded as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, in the Hindi vernacular poetical style called 'Barvai Chand' from which the Book derives its name.

Tulsidas was a great and renowned saint-poet of India during the 16th century A.D. This Book was composed by him between V.S. 1630-1680 (A.D. 1573-1623). This makes it obvious that this Book of Tulsidas is a collection of verses which the saint-poet had written over a long period of time.

A 'Barvai Chand' is also called 'Ardha-Sam Maatrik Chanda'. The word 'Chand' is a general term used to denote a system of composition of poetry in Hindi vernacular. The 'Barvai Chand' is a type of poetical composition in Hindi vernacular that consists of two-line verses that are divided into four quarters or parts known as 'Charans'. This word 'Charan' literally means a 'foot'. In the context of Hindi poetry this 'foot' is a poetical measurement of the concerned verse depending upon the number of syllables or vowel sounds that are used to compose it.

In the 'Barvai Chand', the two lines of the verse are divided into four quarters in all, with each line having two quarters or Charans. Therefore, there are four quarters or 'Charans' in all in each verse. The first and the third Charans have 12 Matras (pronounced as 'Maatraas') each, while the second and the fourth Charans have 7 Matras each. The 'Matra' is a vowel sound in Hindi vernacular. So we have $12+7 = 19$ Matras in each line, and $19 \times 2 = 38$ Matras in all in each verse.

The two halves of each line—i.e. the first and the second Charans of the first line, and the third and the fourth Charans of the second line—are usually not marked by coma to indicate a pause in the written version of the verse, but its recitation or reading aloud is done in such a manner that the pause becomes evident in a subtle manner. This is the fascinating aspect and the beauty of this type of composition known as Barvai Chand—that only experts can recite it in the proper manner.

It is also called 'Ardha-Sam Maatrik Chanda' because the first half of each line of the 2-line verse (i.e. the first and the third Charans) has 12 Matras, while the second half of each line (i.e. the second and the fourth Charans) has 7 Matras.

To wit, the 'Sam-Charans', i.e. the 'quarters with even numbers', such as the second and the fourth, have 'odd numbers' of Matras (because they have 7 Matras each), while the 'quarters with odd numbers', such as the first and the third, have 'even numbers' of Matras (because they have 12 Matras each).

It is obvious that to compose a long poetry that narrates a story with these restrictions is indeed a very difficult task. But this difficulty makes this sort of composition exclusive and all the more beautiful and fascinating to compose and read.

The Book 'Barvai Ramayan' has a total of 69 two-line verses (or couplets) composed in the poetical style called Barvai Chand. It is divided into 7 Chapters on the pattern of the famous epic known as 'The Ramayana'. It briefly refers to some of the events narrated in detail in other books describing the story of Lord Ram written by Tulsidas himself. The high point in this Ramayan is its Uttar Kand which extols the greatness and the divinity of Lord Sri Ram's Holy Name, and it incorporates this great saint Tulsidas' fervent appeal-cum-advice to us to rely upon Lord Ram and his holy and powerful divine name for our own spiritual and worldly welfare.

Out of the total of 69 verses in this Book, verse nos. 1-12 are dedicated to meditation on Lord Sri Ram. The next group of verses, from verse no. 13 to 42, pertains to the different episodes in the story of the Ramayan, the story that describes the life and deeds of Lord Ram who is regarded as an incarnation of the Supreme Being known as Lord Vishnu. The final group of verses, from verse no. 43 to 69, is devoted to the glory of Lord Ram and the divinity of his holy name, as well as the spiritual benefits derived by submitting oneself before the Lord.

The 7 Chapters and the verses they include are as follows:-

Chapter 1 is 'Baal Kand', and it has verse nos. 1-19.

Chapter 2 is 'Ayodhya Kand', and it has verse nos. 20-27.

Chapter 3 is 'Aranya Kand', and it has verse nos. 28-33.

Chapter 4 is 'Kishkindha Kand', and it has verse nos. 34-35.

Chapter 5 is 'Sundar Kand', and it has verse nos. 36-41.

Chapter 6 is 'Lanka Kand', and it has only one verse no. 42.

Chapter 7 is 'Uttar Kand', and it has verse nos. 43-69.

At the end, in Appendix no. 1, I have added a brief life sketch of the poet-saint Goswami Tulsidas.

I wished to wash my mind and keep it wet in purity and piousness of Lord Sri Ram's holy name and his glories, and so chose this instrument of writing on and about the Lord for that purpose. Even as Tulsidas could not be satisfied by writing only Ram Charit Manas—the pinnacle in spiritual, devotional, philosophical, and all other metaphysical sciences put together and which is indeed truly referred to as the Veda for the common man in this current era known as Kali Yug—and had penned so many other books based on the theme of Sri Ram, I too took a clue from him and followed his footstep. This is an

exaggeration on my part, as it were, like a fire-fly claiming to follow the sun, but nevertheless—as much as I physically could, I did. Success or failure is neither the aim nor the criterion—self contentment, fulfillment in doing the Lord's work, is.

I have done my bid and leave the rest to the Lord! I am sure the beacon of spiritual hope that Tulsidas had lit—and with all humility at my command, I dared to carry aloft the torch to the four corners of the realm yet not sprayed by this divine light because of the language barrier, for Tulsidas' works are in Hindi, specially using the local Avadhi dialect, and therefore his books could not reach those parts of the world where Hindi is not known. English is the proper vehicle for this purpose. That is why I chose to write English versions of all the books of Goswami Tulsidas that contain the spiritual nectar which provides hope, peace and happiness to the soul—so that these books can reach all the corners of the globe and be accessible to all who wish to drink their nectar without letting the language from creating a barrier. I hope that this symbolic light which I have tried to light by converting the great devotional literature of Tulsidas in English so as to make it accessible to all those who do not know Hindi, the language in which they were originally written by the saint-poet, would not be allowed to flicker and die! What more can be said.

Any inadvertent errors, omissions and commissions that I may have made, I request to be overlooked and be forgiven, for I am an ordinary mortal human being who is incompetent to accomplish the Herculean task which I have set out to accomplish. But the Lord is almighty and mysterious are his ways. No one can be sure what he wants and how he will get his work done. Even if my English versions of Tulsidas books are not up to the mark, but one must remember that they contain the Supreme Being's holy name 'Ram', and this holy Name is *the* spiritual 'pill' that will do its wonderful magic once imbibed by the reader. Afraid of my inaptness and incompetence, I repeatedly bow my head before my Lord Ram seeking forgiveness and endurance, but nevertheless happy that my life and its time and days have been well spent in remembrance of the Lord.

And finally, I offer this book to my beloved Ram with the full hope that his beatific smile will spread across the full length of this globe, bestowing it with his grace, benevolence, love and benediction. I thank my beloved Lord Ram for the privilege he has granted me that I am able to address him as '*my* beloved Ram'. Let the fragrance of this flower spread to all the four corners of the globe and fill my (read—'our') heart, let the light of this lamp shine bright in them, let the residual gloom in them be washed away in the flood of spiritual peace and exhilaration, and let me (read—'us') feel that my (our) life and time had not been in vain. Let me be satisfied that though I could not do much for my Lord, but at least I did what I could. Saying, or even remembering Sri Ram's holy name is enough to cross this ocean of mundane existence, so if we can spend some time thinking, writing, reading and speaking about the Lord, our time has indeed been well spent!

I also express my thanks to Sri Somil Bharti of Kanpur (B.Tech, IIT Kanpur; and MBA, IIM Calcutta) for doing the Roman Transliteration of the verses for me. God Bless him.

AMEN!

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Barvai Ramayan

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बरवै रामायण

बालकाण्ड

Baravai Rāmāyaṇa

Bālakāṇḍa

[Baal Kand is the first Canto or Chapter of the famous epic known universally by the name of 'The Ramayana'. Tulsidas' version of this epic is titled 'Ram Charit Manas'. This epic describes the life and times of Lord Ram who was a human manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Lord Vishnu. In this Canto of the main version of the story, the different reasons why the Lord had to come down to earth as a human prince known by the name of Lord Ram of Ayodhya, and the events of his life related to his childhood days and marriage with Sita, the daughter of the king of Janakpur, has been elaborately narrated.

In our present book 'Barvai Ramayan', its primary author Goswami Tulsidas has selected some specific moments in the Lord's life to briefly outline the events that took place in the early phases of the Lord's life—i.e. from his birth till his marriage with Sita.

As has been noted in the introduction (Preface) of this book, the beauty of this composition lies in the way the verses have been composed by Tulsidas who employed his expertise with words and skill in writing poetry to outline the story of Lord Ram in a style of composition known as 'Barvai Chand' in Hindi vernacular.]

बड़े नयन कुटि भृकुटी भाल बिसाल ।
तुलसी मोहत मनहि मनोहर बाल ॥१॥

baṛē nayana kuṭi bhr̥kuṭi bhāla bisāla.
tulasī mōhata manahi manōhara bāla..1..

1-Tulsidas says that (the child Lord Sri Ram) has large (lotus-like) eyes, curved eye-brows (which resemble a bow), and a broad forehead. This fabulous and fascinating sight of the child enchants and captivates the heart, and holds the mind of the beholder enthralled.

कुंकुम तिलक भाल श्रुति कुंडल लोल ।
काकपच्छ मिलि सखि कस लसत कपोल ।।2।।

kuṅkuma tilaka bhāla śruti kuṇḍala lōla.
kākapaccha mili sakhi kasa lasata kapōla..2..

2-[The women folk of the palace praise the enchanting beauty of the child Sri Ram. They exclaim—] ‘Oh friend, just have a look at this wonderful sight! There is a Tilak Mark¹ of saffron on his (Sri Ram's) forehead; and ear-rings dangling from the child's ears shimmer continuously as he moves his head. And watch how wonderful and enchanting the child's cheeks, which are round and rosy, look with the thick lock of curly hairs dangling over them and encircling them from all sides.’

[¹The ‘Tilak Mark’ is an auspicious sign marked on the forehead of a Hindu. It is usually made from a paste of sandalwood. It has two variants—one consists of at least two parallel lines drawn horizontally across the forehead above the two eye-brows, and the other consists of a single line marked vertically up from the base of the nose to the approximate center-point of the forehead just below the hairline.

In the case of Sri Ram, this Tilak Mark is made vertically from the mid point of the eyebrows just above the base of the nose, and goes up across the center of the forehead till the hairline. This will be clear in the next verse no. 3.]

भाल तिलक सर सोहत भौंह कमान ।
मुख अनुहरिया केवल चंद समान ।।3।।

bhāla tilaka sara sōhata bhaunha kamāna.
mukha anuhariyā kēvala canda samāna..3..

3-The line of the Tilak Mark on the forehead (of Lord Ram as a child) looks as adorable as an arrow that is mounted on a bow, which here is represented by the curved eye-brows of the child. [The Tilak Mark is made vertically from the mid point of the eyebrows just above the base of the nose, and goes up across the center of the forehead till the hairline. Since the eyebrows are curved, it resembles an arrow that is mounted on a bow.]

Only the beauty of the full Moon¹ can be compared with the bewitching beauty of the child's (Sri Ram's) face.

[¹In Indian poetry, the 'full disc of the moon' is regarded as an epitome of beauty and charm. So here, the face of child Sri Ram is compared to the full Moon to highlight its unique beauty.]

तुलसी बंक बिलोकनि मृदु मुसकानि ।
कस प्रभु नयन कमल अस कहौं बखानि ।।4।।

tulasī baṅka bilōkani mṛdu musakāni.
kasa prabhu nayana kamala asa kahauṁ bakhāni..4..

4-Tulsidas says that Lord Ram pleasantly glances sideways, and he sports a sweet smile on his lips.

[Tulsidas wonders—] How can I dare to compare the beauty of his eyes with a lotus flower (because the Lord's charming eyes are perennially bewitching and beautiful, whereas the lotus flower shrivels up and closes its petals in the night, losing its charm)?¹

[¹To wit, Tulsidas says that he does not think it proper to compare the beauty of the eyes of Lord Ram with the lotus flower though it is usually the way poets describe the beauty of the eyes of the object of their adoration. The lotus flower loses its charm during the night when its petals close, while the charm of Lord Ram's eyes is eternal.]

चढ़त दसा यह उतरत जात निदान ।
कहौं न कबहूँ करकस भौं कमान ।।5।।

carḥata dasā yaha utarata jāta nidāna.
kahauṁ na kabahūṁ karakasa bhauṁ kamāna..5..

5-I (Tulsidas) shall never say that Lord Ram's eyebrows are actually like a 'bow' which is deemed to be stern and hard by its nature. This is because when the bow faces an enemy it becomes taut as it is stringed and pulled to shoot the arrow, while it becomes flaccid and limp when it is un-stringed and set aside to rest.

Lord Ram is ever so merciful and kind. He is so compassionate that though his eye-brows remain perpetually curved like a stringed bow, yet they are never meant to harm or scold or look down upon anybody. Rather, the curve of the Lord's eye-brows adds a special charm to his already beautiful face¹.

[¹Tulsidas says that the metaphor of the bow is used merely to give an idea of how smoothly curved the eye-brows of the Lord are, and nothing else. The bow is a stern weapon that is used to harm one's enemy, but Lord Ram is an eternal fount of mercy and

compassion, and so there is no reason why the Lord would cast an angry glance at someone with an eyebrow that is raised and curved to indicate the Lord's anger. The Lord never means any harm to anyone, not even an enemy, because the Lord is mercy personified. The 'bow' is made of a hard material, but the Lord's eyebrows are extremely soft, tender and supple. The softly curved contour of the eyebrow is regarded in poetry as being more beautiful than any other form.]

काम रूप सम तुलसी राम सरूप ।
को कबि समसरि करै परै भवकूप ।।6।।

kāma rūpa sama tulasī rāma sarūpa.
kō kabi samasari karai parai bhavakūpa..6..

6-Tulsidas wonders which poet is so foolish that he would dare to compare the beautiful, charming and peerless image of Lord Sri Ram with that of Kamdeo (cupid), because this would be a show of grave incompetence and impertinence on his part as well as a sinful act which will make him fall in the dark well represented by this mundane, deluding and entrapping world.

[Lord Ram is the Supreme Being who is incomparable and most holy and divine, while Kamdeo (cupid) is synonymous with lust and passion. The Lord provides liberation and deliverance from the entanglements of this world, while Kamdeo traps a person in the web of desires and yearnings. The beauty of the Lord has a divine, subtle and ethereal dimension, whereas the beauty of Kamdeo is earthly and gross.

So therefore there is no comparison between the two, though the Lord's charming image is often times compared with the beauty of Kamdeo-cupid. But it must be remembered that it is done just to give ordinary people an idea of the Lord's beauty that is unparalleled and most bewitching, because the people do not have the mental ability to even imagine the dimension, the depth, the extent and intensity of the Lord's charm if they are not given an idea by citing an example that they are acquainted with. To wit, the Lord and everything associated with him are beyond the comprehension of the people.

In the next verse no. 7, Tulsidas gives some simple reasons why it is wrong to compare Lord Ram with Kamdeo-cupid.]

साधु सुसील सुमति सुचि सरल सुभाव ।
राम नीति रत काम कहा यह पाव ।।7।।

sādhū susīla sumati suci sarala subhāva.
rāma nīti rata kāma kahā yaha pāva..7..

7-Lord Sri Ram is pure-hearted and pious (*sādhū*); he is most courteous, amiable, gentle good-mannered and extremely civilized (*susīla*); he is most wise, and has noble and positive thoughts (*sumati*); he is clean, auspicious and holy within and without (*suci*); and his nature and character are simple, straightforward, unpretentious, noble and virtuous (*sarala subhāva*).

Lord Ram is very diligent in following the path that is in accordance with the laws of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety and ethics (*rāma nīti rata*). Say, where can Kamdeo-cupid ever imagine being a match for the Lord? Where can he ever find these immaculate and glorious qualities and virtues that Lord Ram possesses? [Refer verse no. 6.]

[Tulsidas gives the reasons why it is wrong to compare Lord Ram with Kamdeo, the patron god of passion, lust and desires. The fact is that there is no comparison between the two.]

सीक धनुष हित सिखन सकुचि प्रभु लीन ।
मुदित माँगि इक धनुही नृप हँसि दीन ॥८॥

sīnka dhanuṣa hita sikhana sakuci prabhu līna.
mudita māṁgi ika dhanuhī nṛpa haṁśi dīna..8..

8-Once, the child (Lord Sri Ram, being born in the warrior race known as ‘Kshatriya’) picked up a reed or a long blade of grass, with great hesitation, to make a bow out of it and learn archery. [His father king Dasrath was watching.] Seeing this, the king got a small bow made especially for him, and fondly gave it to him with a smile.

[Lord Sri Ram's hesitation indicates that he did not wish to pick up something or learn an art which would kill others or harm them. But he had no choice, because for one, he was born as a Kshatriya, which is a warrior class, and second but most important reason was that he had to slay the demons and get the earth freed from their torments, for which arms were necessary. So he was ‘hesitant’ in picking up a reed or a blade of grass to playfully bend it in the shape of a bow.

His father, king Dasrath, was watching the child play. When he observed that the child was attempting to make a bow out of a reed, he ordered a small bow to be made especially for the child so that he can play with it, and by-and-by learn how to use it and be comfortable with it. This initial practice and love for the bow, which the child now thought to be his favourite plaything, would help him to be at ease with the actual bow when he grows up and becomes an adult warrior.]

केस मुकुत सखि मरकत मनिमय होत ।
हाथ लेत पुनि मुकुता करत उदोत ॥९॥

kēsa mukuta sakhi marakata manimaya hōta.
hātha lēta puni mukutā karata udōta..9..

9-[Tulsidas now briefly describes the adorable image of Sita. She was the princess of Janakpur who would later on marry Lord Ram. The women folk of Janakpur say to each other—] ‘Oh Friend (sakhi), look! The pearls (mukutā)—which are used to decorate the thick plait of dense dark hairs on the head of Sita—look like beads of emerald (marakata). But when the same pearls are taken in the hand, they get back their original shade of radiant white.’

[The pearls are whitish in colour. But when they are stuck in the thick plait of dark hairs on the head of Sita they reflect the colour of the hair and assume a hue that resembles that of emerald.]

सम सुबरन सुषमाकर सुखद न थोर ।
सिय अंग सखि कोमल कनक कठोर ॥१०॥

sama subarana suṣamākara sukhada na thōra.
siya aṅga sakhi kōmala kanaka kaṭhōra..10..

10-[The ladies continued—] ‘Oh Friend (sakhi)! (Comparing Sita's complexion with gold, she says) The gold can be compared to the complexion of Sita in radiance and glow, but it is no match for her in giving solace, succour, peace, happiness and bliss to the living being.

Besides this, Sita's body is tender, while the gold is a hard metal.’

[Gold is a worldly thing; a material thing. It can give a sense of material well-being and comfort because it indicates prosperity and financial prosperity, but gold cannot give spiritual peace and eternal happiness to anyone. To wit, gold, which symbolizes worldly riches, first creates and then increases greed and so many other problems and worries for the person who possesses it. It ignites heart-burn, jealousy and animosity. This robs the person of his internal peace.

On the contrary, if Goddess Laxmi, who is the patron goddess of wealth and prosperity, is pleased with a person then it is certain that such a man would not have to suffer from any wants in the world, while at the same time maintaining his peace and happiness.

A man hoards gold to meet his financial emergencies and give him a sense of satisfaction, but this gold can be a cause of immense problems for him—such as getting killed by thieves or facing jealousy from others who would do whatever they can to ruin him and bring him to his heels. But when goddess Laxmi, who is personified as Sita, becomes benevolent upon a person then he will be well provided for sans the bother and the worry that are associated with the hoard of gold that he might have.

This is what Tulsidas means here. He basically says that if a person wishes to have an eternal source of peace and happiness in life then he must not pursue gold or any other kind of material things of the mortal world, but instead focus his mind on spiritual matters and become devoted to Lord Ram and Sita who respectively personify the Supreme Being and his cosmic dynamic powers known as Shakti. If a person is intelligent and wise enough to do so then he will never suffer from any wants whatsoever.]

सिय मुख सरद कमल जिमि किमि कहि जाइ ।
निसि मलीन वह निसि दिन यह बिगसाइ ॥११॥

siya mukha sarada kamala jimi kimi kahi jā'i.
nisi malīna vaha nisi dina yaha bigasā'i..11..

11-How can Sita's face be compared to the lotus flower as it appears during the winter season, because the latter shrivels up and closes (i.e. becomes gloomy) during the night whereas the face of Sita is uniformly and eternally cheerful, charming and radiant (and literally blooming like an evergreen beautiful flower).

[Earlier in verse no. 4 we have read a similar thing when the eyes of Lord Ram are compared to the lotus flower. There also Tulsidas says that though poets usually use the lotus flower to describe the beauty of the Lord's eyes, but this comparison is erroneous and only meant to give an idea of the bewitching beauty of the Lord's eyes. But the comparison should stop here. The fact is that the lotus flower closes its petals during the night and looks gloomy, but the eyes of Lord Ram are always fresh, charming and attractive.

Similarly, the lotus flower shrivels up and closes during the winter night, looking gloomy and forlorn, but the face of Sita is ever so radiant and beautiful.]

चंपक हरवा अंग मिलि अधिक सोहाइ ।
जानि परै सिय हिवरें जब कुंभिलाइ ॥१२॥

campaka haravā aṅga mili adhika sōhā'i.
jāni parai siya hivarēm jaba kumbhilā'i..12..

12-A garland of Champa flowers (flowers of a tree called *Michelia Champacca*, having yellow, fragrant flowers) that adorns the body of Sita looks very magnificent. It merges so perfectly with the radiant beauty and the glow of her body that one hardly realizes its presence. It is only when the flowers dry up and wither away that its presence on her body becomes discernible.

[This is because the withered flowers lose their charm and beauty, and then they stand out in sharp contrast with the eternal beauty of Sita's skin. To wit, the yellow flowers of Champa harmonize perfectly with the golden complexion of Sita while the garland is fresh, but when the flowers begin to dry up one can easily distinguish the garland as being a separate entity lying around the neck of Sita when the contrast between the glowing and healthy skin of Sita and the withered look of the flowers becomes sharp.]

सिय तुव अंग रंग मिलि अधिक उदोत ।
हार बेल पहिरावौ चंपक होत ॥13॥

siya tuva aṅga raṅga mili adhika udōta.
hāra bēla pahirāvaum campaka hōta..13..

13-[One of Sita's friends tells her—] 'Sita! The garland of Champa flowers that you wear gets enhanced in its beauty and charm when it adorns your body. It appears that the flowers have acquired their radiant colour and beauty only when they come close to your body. [That is, the same garland would not seem so beautiful and enchanting if it was seen separately from your body. When you wear it, its beauty is increased manifold.]

The wonder is that even when I put a garland of (white) Jasmine flowers on your body, it acquires the hue of the Champa flowers (by the virtue of their proximity with your body, which has a golden hue). [To wit, your skin is so radiant and glowing that even the white flowers of the garland appear to be of a yellow hue when you wear it. The reason is that the fresh flowers of Jasmine are glistening with drops of water, and their petals are fresh and taut. So they reflect the colour of Sita's glowing complexion which has a golden hue like that of the Champa flower. The net effect is that the white flowers of Jasmine look as if they were yellow flowers of Champa.]

नित्य नेम कृत अरुन उदय जब कीन ।
निरखि निसाकर नृप मुख भए मलीन ॥14॥

nitya nēma kṛta aruna udaya jaba kīna.
nirakhi nisākara nrpa mukha bha'ē malīna..14..

14-[In this and the following verses, Tulsidas briefly describes the sights of the day the bow-breaking ceremony was to be held at Janakpur. It was so ordained by Sita's father, king Janak, that anyone who would break a certain Bow belonging to Lord Shiva that was lying in the king's custody since ages would be able to wed Sita. This particular verse tells us how beautiful Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman looked that day.]

When the sun rose on the horizon in the morning, Lord Sri Ram and Laxman did their daily morning routine (such as washing and bathing themselves to get ready to attend the bow-breaking ceremony). Seeing Lord Ram at the venue, the faces of all other assembled kings and princes who were invited to attend the ceremony to try their luck paled like the face of the moon does after sun-rise. [Here, Lord Ram is compared to the rising sun, and the rest of the kings as the moon. Just as the shine of the moon fades away when the sun rises on the horizon, all hopes of the assembled kings and princes of ever marrying Sita by breaking the bow were dashed when Lord Ram appeared at the venue.]¹

[¹What has been only briefly referred to here by the poet has been described in the epic 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Baal Kand, (i) from Doha no. 238—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 245; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 263.]

कमठ पीठ धनु सजनी कठिन अँदेस ।
तमकि ताहि ए तोरिहिं कहब महेस ॥15॥

kamaṭha pīṭha dhanu sajanī kaṭhina aṁdēsa.
tamaki tāhi ē tōrihiṁ kahaba mahēsa..15..

15-[At the arena, the women folk of Janakpur talk with each other when they saw Lord Sri Ram and Laxman. One said to another—] 'Oh my gracious and dear friend (sajanī)! Only one doubt arises in my heart (as to whether or not Sri Ram would be able to marry Sita by breaking the bow), because the bow is as hard as the shell of a tortoise.' [The first lady doubted whether Lord Ram would be actually able to marry Sita because the marriage depends upon the bow and its breaking. And this 'bow' was no ordinary one—it was extremely heavy, strong and tuff, like the shell of a tortoise. So she wondered how Lord Ram would break it and become eligible to marry Sita.]

[The companion replied—] 'Look, Lord Ram shall certainly break it, and he would do so very swiftly, almost instantly when he touches it. Lord Shiva shall himself instruct the bow to become light and break on its own so that Lord Ram does not have to face any resistance and feel any sort of discomfort while trying to lift and break the bow.'

[This 'bow' belonged to Lord Shiva, and it was kept for safekeeping in some ancient time by Lord Shiva with the family of Sita's forefathers, the kings of Janakpur. Lord Ram was revered and worshipped by Lord Shiva, and so therefore Shiva would think it to be his honour and privilege if he could help the Lord whom he worships to fulfill his desire. Hence, Shiva would quietly ensure that none but Lord Ram breaks the bow, no matter what trick he had to adapt to make this happen.

A similar ideas is also expressed in 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-7 that precede Doha no. 223; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 254—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 258; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 260—to Doha no. 261.]

नृप निरास भए निरखत नगर उदास ।
धनुष तोरि हरि सब कर हरेउ हरास ।।16।।

nrpa nirāsa bha'ē nirakhata nagara udāsa.
dhanuṣa tōri hari saba kara harē'u harāsa..16..

16-All the invited kings (who had assembled at the venue of the bow-breaking ceremony to try their luck at breaking the bow so they could marry Sita) failed even to move the bow an inch, what to talk of lifting and breaking it. Hence, all of them lost all hopes, and became dejected and shameful¹.

This was a very sad moment for all, for Sita and her family as well as the citizens of Janakpur. A thick pall of gloom and helplessness descended over the city, and all its inhabitants looked gloomy, forlorn and distraught.

At that time Lord Sri Ram removed all their sorrows and worries by breaking the bow².

[¹King Janak, the father of Sita, had made a vow that anyone who broke an old and decrepit bow of Lord Shiva that was kept in his family from time immemorial would be able to marry his daughter without any questions asked. Janak knew that whoever broke the bow would certainly not be an ordinary king or prince for he rightly deduced that it would not be easy for any ordinary person to tackle a bow that belonged to Shiva. So in a way he would be sure that the future husband of his daughter was a man of very special virtues and character, a great warrior who possessed immense strength and unmatched abilities, and above all would be a person of a stature no less than that of Lord Shiva because it is only then that Shiva would allow his bow to be broken by that person.

Refer: 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 250.

²When none of the assembled kings and princes could as much as move the bow, a pall of gloom and hopelessness descended over the city because now it appeared that Sita, the

princess who was loved by all the citizens, would have to remain unmarried. But when Lord Ram broke the bow, there was a spontaneous eruption of exultation, joy and cheer throughout the city. The thunderous uproar of joy and elation in the city coincided with the ear-splitting thunderclap-like sound of the breaking of the bow. This sound reverberated and spread in all the directions of the compass, and it reached far corners of the earth. What a moment ago was a lost and dejected situation now suddenly turned into a moment of celebration and extreme exultation and joy. There was an instantaneous applause, and an exuberant mood of exhilaration and ecstasy prevailed in the city that was a while ago covered with a dark cloud of sorrow and gloom.

This episode has been elaborately described in 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 252; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 254; (iii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 261—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 265; and (iv) from Doha no. 285—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 286.]

का घूँघट मुख मूदह नवला नारि ।
चाँद सरग पर सोहत यहि अनुहारि ।।17।।

kā ghūmṅhaṭa mukha mūdaha navalā nāri.
cām̐da saraga para sōhata yahi anuhāri..17..

17-[After the marriage, the friends of Sita began to tease her in a friendly and playful manner when they found that she was feeling shy to look up directly at Lord Ram, the bridegroom, and out of modesty had her eyes looking down. They joked—]

'Oh young lady of beauty and charm (navalā nāri)! Why do you have your gaze transfixed and appear to be dazed as if in awe and wonder! Why are you hesitantly hiding your face with your veil? A moon similar to him (Sri Ram's charming face) adorns the sky, and don't you ever look at it? [So therefore, if you can look at the moon and don't feel shy at it, why can't you then look up and see the bewitchingly beautiful face of Lord Ram which is also like the moon, and thereby feel blessed at having the opportunity of viewing the lovely face of the Lord from so close a quarter? Why don't you enjoy this most enchanting sight, and why are you shying away from it? Come on, grow up and stop acting like a child!]'

गरब करहु रघुनंदन जनि मन माहँ ।
देखहु आपनि मूरति सिय कै छाहँ ।।18।।

garaba karahu raghunandana jani mana māham̐.
dēkhahu āpani mūrati siya kai chāham̐..18..

18-[Then Sita's friends turn to Lord Sri Ram to poke fun at him—]

‘Oh Raghunandan (literally a prince of king Raghu’s dynasty of Ayodhya)! Do not be proud in your heart about your beauty. Look, your image (complexion) is dark as if it was only a shadow of Sita (who was of a fair complexion). See it for your self.’

[Lord Ram had a dark complexion like the rain-bearing cloud as compared to that of Sita which was fair and had a golden hue. The lady friends of Sita are teasing the Lord and having a fun time by cracking jokes during their first meeting with the Lord.

The newly wed couple was feeling shy to look directly in the eye. Refer also to ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, (i) Chanda line nos. 13-14 that precede Doha no. 325; (ii) Doha no. 326; (iii) Chanda line nos. 9-12 that precede Doha no. 327.

But come to think of it—how fortunate were they! They were watching the Lord-of-the-Universe at so close quarters. They were standing right in the front of the Lord who is believed to be inaccessible even to the greatest of sages and hermits. Indeed, they were most fortunate and privileged. Herein lies the great secret of a manifestation of the Supreme Being—it helps even ordinary people to come in close contact with the Lord of the World, a good fortune that would be otherwise be possible only through very hard and difficult methods as prescribed in the scriptures.]

उठीं सखीं हँसि मिस करि कहि मृदु बैन ।
सिय रघुबर के भए उनीदे नैन ॥19॥

uṭhīm sakhīm haṁsi misa kari kahi mṛdu baina.
siya raghubara kē bha'e unīdē naina..19..

19-After some time, Sita's friends got up to leave, saying that the eyes of Sita and Raghubir (Sri Ram) were drowsy with sleep (and therefore they should be left alone).

[Refer also to ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 358 where a similar scene has been described.]

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Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

**[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]**

अयोध्याकाण्ड

ayōdhyākāṇḍa

[Ayodhya Kand is the second Canto of the epic ‘Ramayana’. In this Canto we read in detail about that part of the story of Lord Ram that deals with the plans of his father king Dasrath to anoint him as the Regent of the kingdom, how and why this plan was foiled by Kaikeyi, the Lord’s step-mother who wanted her own son Bharat to be put on the throne, and the Lord’s exile to the forest for fourteen years due to this palace intrigue. During this narration we also read about Bharat’s exemplary show of noble character in not only completely disassociating himself from his mother’s evil scheme but also refusing to accept the crown of Ayodhya which he said rightly belonged to his elder brother Lord Ram, and his going to the forest in an attempt to bring the Lord back, which however ultimately failed as the Lord had to go ahead with his divine mandate to eliminate the demons led by their ferocious king Ravana of Lanka, for which purpose he had to proceed ahead on his journey onwards in the forest so that this mission could be accomplished.]

In our present book ‘Barvai Ramayan’ however, Tulsidas refers only to certain events that briefly mark this phase of the story of Lord Ram—the high-point of which was the Lord’s going to the forest for fourteen years.]

सात दिवस भए साजत सकल बनाउ ।
का पूछहु सुठि राउर सरल सुभाउ ।।20 ।।

sāta divasa bha'e sājata sakala banā'u.
kā pūchahu suṭhi rā'ura sarala subhā'u..20..

20-[Manthara, the hunch-back maid of Kaikeyi who was the latter's close confidante, instigates her. She said to Kaikeyi—] 'Seven days have passed since all the paraphernalia required for anointing Ram as the prince regent of the kingdom of Ayodhya have been arranged by the king (but you were kept in the dark). What do you ask me now—you are very simple-hearted (and don't understand the gravity of the situation).'

[1King Dasrath had made elaborate plans to appoint Lord Ram to the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya. However, Manthara was jealous of Lord Ram's anointment because she wanted Bharat, the son of her mistress Kaikeyi, to ascend the throne. Being wicked by nature, of a crooked mind and a pervert at heart, she thought that if Bharat would become a king she would enjoy more privileges than what she enjoys now—never mind if this evil scheme would throw the kingdom in turmoil and was against set norms of righteousness and traditions. It so happened that Dasrath did not think of telling Kaikeyi about the event because it was a routine affair of the kingdom and strictly in accordance with the laws and rules of appointing the heir to the throne. He was not doing anything extra-constitutional or against established traditions. It was a matter of state policy, and therefore it was not necessary to discuss it with his wife. So he did not find it necessary to tell her though he loved her very much. The irony of the situation is that Kaikeyi herself loved Sri Ram as much as she loved Bharat, her own son. This event of Kaikeyi being instrumental in Lord Ram's forest exile and the subsequent death of her husband Dasrath as well as the upheaval it created in the kingdom in its wake shows that when the time is bad even the most unexpected things can happen. Besides this, one cannot take the people of the world for granted, and sometimes it happens that the dearest of people become one's greatest of enemies.

Well therefore, Manthara sowed the seeds of anger, discontent, suspicion and bitterness when she instigates Kaikeyi by her provocative arguments as follows—'Don't you realise that this fact of Ram's anointment was concealed from you willingly by Dasrath? Why, did you ever ponder over it? It shows that the king has no faith in you; he does not trust you. You seem to take him for granted. If he loved you so much as you believe he does, then why did he not tell you about the plan of anointing Ram on the throne of Ayodhya? Did he not know that it is a tradition that the eldest son is crowned, and so what fear did he have from you so as to conceal such an important decision? Was he suspicious of you and feared that you will create some problem for him? Obviously, Dasrath's other wife Kaushalya hatched a conspiracy to sideline you by prevailing upon the king to appoint her son Ram on the throne because she is jealous of you and feared that if the king had his way he would appoint Bharat instead of Ram. She blackmailed him somehow, and that is why the confused Dasrath hid this news from you. Had everything been above board, he should have called you queens together for a joint meeting and divulged his plans and built a consensus on the issue. Why did he not do so?

So beware Kaikeyi—if Ram ascends the throne on the appointed day, then you have bad days ahead for yourself. Don't blame me later on that I did not warn you.'

Kaikeyi was convinced. She threw a huge tantrum and raised so much hue and cry that king Dasrath was forced to send Lord Ram to the forest for fourteen years. Sita, the Lord's wife, and Laxman, his younger step-brother, accompanied the Lord.

From a broader perspective it is important to note that though Kaikeyi had got a bad name due to this event, but actually she played a crucial role in helping the Lord fulfill his divine mission of eliminating the cruel demons and freeing the earth from their torments. Had Kaikeyi not forced Lord Ram to go to the forest, the demon king Ravana would not have been killed, and the primary purpose of the Lord coming down to earth as a human being would have failed. So in reality the entire credit for Lord Ram's success in fulfilling his divine mission and establishing his glory as the slayer of demons and the liberator of the earth actually goes to Kaikeyi in spite of the fact that she has been reviled and vilified by all because of her role in sending the Lord to the forest.

This entire episode has been described in the epic 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Doha no. 79.]

राजभवन सुख बिलसत सिय सँग राम ।
बिपिन चले तजि राज सो बिधि बड़ बाम ।।21।।

rājabhavana sukha bilasata siya saṁgā rāma.
bipina calē taji rāja sō bidhi baṛa bāma..21..

21-Lord Sri Ram had been enjoying the various comforts of the palace alongside his consort Sita. But the same Lord Ram left the kingdom for the forest (without any regret and bitterness, without any malice, hatred or anger, as if both were the same for him). The ways of the Creator are indeed very ironic, mysterious and strange; the way the Creator makes things turn topsy-turvy are unpredictable and incredulous!

[No one knows what is written in one's destiny. No one can be sure what awaits him in the future, and what providence has in store for him. The consequences or the result of deeds done by a person are bound to be suffered by him. Look at the case of Lord Ram himself. He was born as a royal prince; he was just a few hours away from being appointed to the throne. His step mother Kaikeyi loved him as much as she loved her own son Bharat. Even Bharat was innocent and he had the greatest of respects for Lord Ram. All the citizens were happy, and even the royal priest of the kingdom, sage Vasistha, had issued instructions for the Lord's anointment. Then all of a sudden everything collapsed like a house of cards.

When Lord Ram was informed that he would have to proceed to the forest for fourteen long years, he showed no emotions. He remained calm and poised as if nothing wrong had happened at all, and as if he knew that it was to happen exactly as he had wished it to be. So therefore, during the entire episode Lord Ram never showed even a trace of annoyance, bitterness, anger and hatred for anyone. He was as calm as ever, for the Lord was enlightenment, self-realisation and wisdom personified. He knew that the

soul never suffers, and all these things such as the physical comforts and pleasures of the kingdom and the pains and suffering of the forest are limited to the physical gross body which is not one's truthful 'self'. So it does not really matter whether one lives in a palace or in a forest?

Besides this philosophical angle, the Lord knew that his going to the forest was a necessary part of the larger scheme of things as otherwise it would not be possible to eliminate the scourge of the demons, the purpose for which he had come down to earth in a human form.

This part of the story has been narrated in detail in 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 46; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 77—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 81.]

कोउ कह नर नारायन हरि हर कोउ ।
कोउ कह बिहरत बन मधु मनसिज दोउ ।।22।।

kō'u kaha nara nārāyana hari hara kō'u.
kō'u kaha biharata bana madhu manasija dō'u..22..

22-[Seeing Lord Sri Ram and Laxman on the forest path—] Some who saw them said that they were the personified form of two ancient sages known as 'Nara and Narayan'. Others said that they were personified forms of Lords Vishnu and Shiva respectively. And still others said that Kamdeo-cupid (personified as Lord Ram) and Basant (the spring season personified as Laxman) were wandering in the forest (to bless one and all).

[This verse sums up the enchantment of the villagers and travelers and all others who saw and met Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman while they moved ahead on the path to the forest. All were awe-struck with amazement and wonder at the bewitching beauty of the two brothers and the enchanting sight of them walking barefoot on the path. The two brothers captivated the heart and mind of all those who beheld them, holding one and all completely enthralled and mesmerised. At every waypoint on the journey, the people crowded around the two brothers and were overwhelmed with loving emotions for them.

Refer also to (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 89; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 110—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 124; and (b) Tulsidas' book 'Geetawali Ramayan', Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 15—42 that beautifully describe the scene of the way the wayside villagers and the travelers who met Lord Ram and Laxman on the forest path felt and how emotional they had become.]

तुलसी भइ मति बिथकित करि अनुमान ।
राम लखन के रूप न देखेउ आन ।।23।।

tulasī bha'i mati bithakita kari anumāna.
rāma lakhana kē rūpa na dēkhē'u āna..23..

23-Tulsidas says that the mind and intellect of the simple-hearted wayside residents along the forest path (such as the ordinary peasants, villagers, tribal-people, as well as the many travelers who happened to meet the two brothers as they wended their way to the forest) became tired of guessing about who they actually were. They could not find any other god or deity who can be compared to the charm and the most enchanting and incomparably beautiful image of Lord Sri Ram and Laxman.

[The awe-struck and mesmerised people whom the two brothers met on their way to the forest tried all sorts of guessing, conjectures and comparisons to deduce who these two gentlemen actually were. But they failed as they had never ever seen a sight as fascinating and marvelous as of the two brothers Lord Ram and Laxman, nor had they ever heard in their lives of anyone who was like them.

Verse no. 26 below further describes this scene.]

तुलसी जनि पग धरहु गंग मह साँच ।
निगानाँग करि नितहि नचाइहि नाच ।।24 ।।

tulasī jani paga dharahu gaṅga maha sām̐ca.
nigānām̐ga kari nitahi nacā'ihi nāca..24..

24-[Alluding to the episode of the Boatman, and repeating his words—] Tulsidas says, 'Standing in the water of river Ganges, I say truthfully that you must not put your foot in my boat (because the wooden boat shall be converted into a fine lady, and seeing me with her), my wife would get so annoyed that she would daily make me dance naked (i.e. she would tease me daily and make life hell for me).'

[Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita reached the banks of river Ganges. The Lord summoned a boatman, known as Kevat, to take them across the river. Kevat had heard that a stone was converted into a divine lady when Lord Ram had touched it with his foot. This refers to the episode when Ahilya, the cursed wife of sage Gautam, was liberated from her curse which had turned her into a stone when the dust of Lord Ram's foot touched her. This event occurred while the Lord accompanied sage Vishwamitra to Janakpur to attend the bow-breaking ceremony where ultimately he would marry Sita.

The news of this miraculous act had spread like wildfire far and wide. Kevat had obviously heard of it. So now he feared that his boat, which was made of wood which is much softer than a stone, would also turn into some sort of a lady if Lord Ram's foot touched it! Therefore he refused to let Lord Ram and his companions, Laxman and Sita, to set foot on his humble boat before washing the Lord's feet. Though he may not have been aware of the Lord's origin and actual identity as the Supreme Being, but this event proved to be a god-sent opportunity for him to attain liberation and deliverance for himself and his family.

Kevat told Lord Ram that if by chance his old boat turned into a lady as did the stone on an early occasion, all hell would break loose for him. For one, he would have two women to take care of—one was his wife and the other would be this new-found lady. Besides this, his own wife would beat him black and blue if she discovered he has another lady hidden somewhere; that he had secretly kept a mistress without her knowledge. Further, if his boat vanished and turned into a woman like the stone turning into Ahilya, he would lose his only means of livelihood. So therefore he does not want to take this risk. If the Lord wants to use his boat to go across river Ganges, he must let him wash his feet first!

Kevat however was very wise and clever. He had recognized who Lord Ram actually was. So his apparent stubbornness and impertinence was taken cheerfully by Lord Ram who smiled and let him have his way. Kevat washed the Lord's holy feet and not only sipped this sanctified water himself but made his entire family and clan sip it, thereby providing all of them liberation and deliverance from this mortal world.

He then took the Lord most cheerfully across the river, thanking his stars and good luck for this day. At the other bank of the river, he refused to take the ferrying charges from Lord Ram, praying that it be kept pending for those precious moments when he would seek its redemption at the time of his death. In this clever way the humble Kevat ensured his salvation and emancipation. The Lord smiled at his smartness and devotion, and silently endorsed his wishes.

This incident is narrated in (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102; and (b) the book 'Kavitawali' by Tulsidas, in its Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 5-10.

The episode of the stone turning into Ahilya has been narrated in 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.]

सजल कठौता कर गहि कहत निषाद ।
चढ़हु नाव पग धोइ करहु जनि बाद ।।25।।

sajala kaṭhautā kara gahi kahata niṣāda.
caṛḥahu nāva paga dhō'i karahu jani bāda..25..

25-Nishad (the boatman) holds a wooden bowl full of water in his hands, and pleads (with Lord Sri Ram)—'Oh Lord! Please wash your feet in this first, and then board the boat. Do not argue unnecessarily.'

[Just imagine the boldness of this humble man. His language is like an ordinary, uneducated, rustic country-folk. Here he was talking to the prince of his kingdom, and still he had the courage to force his wishes on him. Kevat knew very well that the Lord will never take offense at him for he knew the nature of the Lord—that he was very merciful and compassionate and forgiving. He also knew that the Lord had no choice as there weren't any other boat in the vicinity, and if the Lord grew angry at him he would simply pull the boat back into the water. Lord Ram was amused, and he may have

thoroughly enjoyed this event. Perhaps this was the first time in his life that he had faced outright refusal for his requests. This also prepared him for the unknown world that he would now face during the long sojourn into the wild forest and beyond into the demon-country.]

कमल कंटकित सजनी कोमल पाइ ।
निसि मलीन यह प्रफुलित नित दरसाइ ।।26 ।।

kamala kaṇṭakita sajanī kōmala pā'i.
nisi malīna yaha praphulita nita darasā'i..26..

26-[The village women folk watch Lord Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita going down the forest path and lament that they are suffering so much. They say—] ‘Oh dear friend (sajanī)! The lotus has thorns whereas their feet are softer than its petals. Not only this, the flower shrivels up in the night while they are perennially blooming (fresh, tender and soft).’ [Here, the ‘feet’ of Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman are compared to a lotus flower.]

[Refer to verse nos. 22-23 herein above.]

वाल्मीकिवचन

vālmīkivacana

द्वै भुज करि हरि रघुबर सुंदर बेष ।
एक जीभ कर लछिमन दूसर सेष ।।27 ।।

dvai bhuja kari hari raghubara sundara bēṣa.
ēka jībha kara lachimana dūsara sēṣa..27..

27-Sage Valmiki said, ‘The beautifully attired Raghubar (Lord Sri Ram) is a two-armed manifestation of Lord Vishnu (the cosmic form of the Lord with four arms), and Laxman is another single-tongued form of the legendary serpent known as Shesh-nath (who has a thousand hoods and an equal number of tongues or fangs).’

[‘Shesh-nath’ has a thousand hoods and as many tongues or fangs. Laxman is a manifestation of this legendary serpent, but in a human form he has only one tongue instead of the thousand tongues of Shesh-nath.]

Lord Vishnu rests on the coiled back of this serpent as it floats on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshir-sagar. It is also believed that Shesh-nath supports the earth from below on its hood.

Meanwhile, Lord Ram was a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being that has four arms.

Tulsidas has wisely added this verse to settle the confusion that confounded the people who saw and met Lord Ram on his way to the forest as narrated in the previous verses. The learned and wise sage Valmiki tells them who the two brothers actually were.]

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Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition & Explanatory Notes]

अरण्यकाण्ड

araṇyakāṇḍa

[Aranya Kand is the third Canto of the Ramayana. In this Canto that part of the story where Lord Ram resided in a place called Panchavati has been described. It was here that he had got Supernakha's ears and nose chopped by Laxman because this demoness, who was a sister of the demon king Ravana, had tried to play dirty tricks with the Lord and terrorise Sita. This led to the battle with demons Khar and Dushan who were slayed by the Lord. Supernakha rushed to Lanka and provoked Ravana to settle scores with Lord Ram. Ravana then forced Marich, another demon who had been flung by the arrow of Lord Ram earlier when the Lord was protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra which Marich had gone to defile, to become a deer with a golden hide who Ravana used as a ploy to kidnap Sita. Abduction of Sita by Ravana was the corner-stone in the story as it led to the epic war of Lanka and the elimination of the cruel demons.]

बेद नाम कहि अँगुरिन खंडि अकास ।
पठयो सूपनखाहि लखन के पास ।।28।।

bēda nāma kahi aṁgurina khaṇḍi akāsa.
paṭhayō sūpanakhāhi lakhana kē pāsa..28..

28-After naming the (four) Vedas symbolized by the to-and-fro (scissor-like clipping) movement of the four erect fingers pointing towards the sky, he (Lord Ram) sent Supernakha to Laxman.

[The Vedas were traditionally taught and received by the oral method. Therefore, the 'ear' was the medium by which the Vedas were transmitted. Since the Vedas consist of hymns, the teacher and the disciple usually wave their 'fingers' in the air to recite or

chant them in a rhythmic manner. The ‘scissor-like clipping movement’ that the Lord used to ‘wave the erect fingers in the air near his ears’ was to transmit the message to Laxman that he should chop-off the ears of Supernakha. To wit, Lord Sri Ram instructed Laxman to chop-off her ears and nose by making signs of his fingers that resembled the way the two hands of a scissor moves. The ‘nose’ is implied in this sign language because to recite and chant the Mantras or the hymns of the Vedas, one has to hold the breath for a prolonged time.

This incident has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 17 along with Chaupai line nos. 3—20 that precedes it.

The story in brief is this: Demon Ravana had a sister called Supernakha (literally meaning one whose nails are as big as a fan). She had a foul heart, was extremely perverted, and was cruel as a serpent (3). She went to Panchvati once, and on seeing the handsome brothers, was bitten by the lust-bug and got her passion aroused (4). Assuming the form of a beautiful damsel, she made lewd and lascivious proposals to Lord Ram, saying—‘I have searched the three Lokas (the 3 worlds consisting of the heaven, earth and nether world) but could not find a man appropriate to my liking (9). For this reason I have remained a virgin till now, but after seeing you, my mind is set at rest a bit. [That is, when I saw you two, I felt that I have finally found someone to my liking.] (10).’

Lord Ram saw that Sita was terrified, and so he signaled Laxman with his eyes (i.e. secretly, by a gesture) (20). Getting a hint from Sri Ram, Laxman chopped-off her ears and nose with agility and dexterity, thereby challenging Ravana by deforming her.]

हेमलता सिय मूरति मृदु मुसुकाइ ।
हेम हरिन कहँ दीन्हैउ प्रभुहि दिखाइ ।।29 ।।

hēmalatā siya mūrati mṛdu musukā'i.
hēma harina kaham' dīnhē'u prabhuhi dikhā'i..29..

29-Sita, who was as tender, attractive and charming as a creeper made of gold (*hēmalatā siya*), smiled softly and sweetly as she showed the (decoy) golden deer (*hēma harina*) to the Lord (Sri Ram), (quietly expressing her wonder at it as well as her desire to have it as a pet). [Sita's demeanours subtly indicated to Lord Ram that the golden deer had fascinated her, and she would like to have it. The comparison of Sita to a golden creeper is because her complexion is fair and radiant like gold, and she looks as amazing as a golden creeper would.]

[Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 26.

The story goes that when Supernakha went to Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, to show him how Lord Ram and Laxman had got her ears and nose cut off, and how the two brothers had eliminated the entire army of the demons Khar and Dushan who had intervened on her behalf and had killed them as well, she pleaded with him to take revenge to save her honour as well as the honour of the entire demon race. Ravana was

extremely troubled even as he wondered as to who could have mustered the courage and dare to challenge the might of the demons. Surely this needed an investigation. So he approached Marich, another demon who lived alone on an isolated island in the middle of the ocean, and asked him to help. Ravana took him along and went to Panchavati, the place in the dense forest where Lord Ram lived at that moment with Sita and Laxman, and where Supernakha was deformed. He ordered Marich to assume the form of a golden deer to provoke Sita into desiring to have it. This illusive deer started frolicking around the hermitage of Lord Ram when it was spotted by Sita, who was so fascinated by it that she asked her husband, Lord Ram, to go and fetch it for her.

Ravana had planned that when Lord Ram would go pursuing the golden deer, he will get an opportunity to abduct Sita and take her home to Lanka as hostage to settle scores with the Lord for humiliating his sister Supernakha.]

जटा मुकुट कर सर धनु संग मरीच ।
चितवनि बसति कनखियनु अँखियनु बीच ।।30 ।।

jaṭā mukuṭa kara sara dhanu saṅga marīca.
citavani basati kanakhiyanu am̐khiyanu bīca..30..

30-[Tulsidas says—] The Lord had a crown of matted hairs on his head; he held a bow and an arrow in his hands as he ran behind Marich (who was disguised as a golden deer at the behest of Ravana). The Lord looked back repeatedly at Sita with a sideways glance as he went far away pursuing the deer. This most endearing and enchanting sight of the Lord resides in the eyes of Sita. [To wit, this was the last glimpse of the Lord that Sita had before her abduction by Ravana. So she carefully and diligently etched this beautiful image of the Lord in her mind and heart so permanently that it remained before her eyes throughout the period of her captivity in Lanka. This image sustained her and kept the hope of meeting the Lord again live in her bosom, which in turn kept her alive during captivity. Otherwise she would have died.]

[Refer: 'Ram Charit Manas', Aranya Kand, Doha no. 29 (b).

When Ravana abducted Sita, she wailed woefully and was exceedingly sorrowful. She had no hope of ever seeing her beloved Lord Ram again. The last image of the Lord that she viewed intently as he picked up the bow and arrow to go behind the golden deer was etched permanently in Sita's memory. This was the last beautiful image of the Lord that Sita enshrined in her heart and mind as the demon Ravana forcefully took her away. The most enchanting sight she last saw of the Lord was permanently engraved in her field of vision—whether she kept her eyes closed or opened, she always imagined that she is seeing the Lord going away behind the golden deer. She was very contrite and regretted her request, but now it was too late.

The Lord had looked back repeatedly at Sita because the Lord is all-knowing and he knew that soon Sita would be abducted and he would not see her for a very long time again. His heart must have cried at the suffering that she would be subjected to for quite some time from now on before he goes and retrieves her from the clutches of the demons.

But it had to be done—because otherwise the demons would not be eliminated and the chief purpose of the Lord coming all the way from his divine abode in the heaven to this mortal world would be unfulfilled.

It is not that Sita did not know what is coming—she had been briefed by the Lord before hand. That is why the Lord had sent Laxman to the forest to collect firewood, and had requested Sita to enter the fire and leave her image behind so that the Lord could accomplish the task of the Gods for which he had come all the way from the heaven to earth, and then from Ayodhya to the forest. Besides this, she was personified goddess Laxmi, therefore nothing was hidden from her as nothing was hidden from Ram who was Lord Vishnu personified. Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 24; and Chaupai line nos. 6-9 that precede Doha no. 27.

To wit, both Sita and Lord Ram knew what was coming. But the drama had to be played with the greatest of skill and secrecy so that no one could get the hint who they actually were—for if the secret was leaked then obviously Ravana would not have abducted Sita, and the whole enterprise of killing the demons on this excuse of Sita’s abduction would have failed.

This is also the reason why Sita had wailed like an ordinary woman who is separated from her husband and taken away by her abductors, and Lord Ram too had wailed and lamented like an ordinary man when he returned to find Sita gone. This is clearly mentioned in ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Aranya Kand, (i) Doha no. 28 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow it; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-17 that precede Doha no. 30.]

रामवाक्य

rāmavākya

कनक सलाक कला ससि दीप सिखाउ ।
तारा सिय कहँ लछिमन मोहि बताउ ॥31॥

kanaka salāka kalā sasi dīpa sikhā'u.
tārā siya kaham̐ lachimana mōhi batā'u..31..

31-[After Sita's abduction by Ravana, Lord Ram returned to his hermitage to find her missing. He lamented and grieved most gravely; he was so stunned and woeful. He emotionally asked his brother Laxman—] Lord Sri Ram said, ‘Oh Laxman! Tell me where is Sita, who is like a golden spike or arrow (kanaka salāka)¹, who is like the phases of the moon (kalā sasi)², who is like the flame of a lamp (dīpa sikhā'u)³, and who is like a brilliant star dazzling in the night sky (tārā siya)⁴? Telling me this Laxman—where is she (lachimana mōhi batā'u)?’

[¹Sita is compared to the spike or the arrow here because she has become the cause of all future troubles for Lord Ram.

²She is likened to the phases of the moon to indicate that, one, she is as beautiful as the moon, and second, like the moon disappearing on the dark night temporarily only to emerge the next day, Sita too has vanished from sight temporarily and the Lord is sure that sooner rather than later he would be able to see her again.

³She is compared to the flame because the agony of her separation would now burn Lord Ram.

⁴She is compared to the star because she is now as distant and inaccessible for the Lord as the distant star in the sky.

Tulsidas has used a number of metaphors to describe the emotional outburst of Lord Ram when he found Sita missing from the hermitage. In the context of this verse, the reader should also read how Lord Ram lamented as described in ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-16 that precede Doha no. 30:-

“Finding the hermitage empty, Lord Ram grieved, ‘Alas! Where is Sita, the daughter of Janak who is a treasury of virtues, of flawless beauty, of an excellent character, of austerity and devotion?’ The Lord asked all the plants and animals that came in the way as he went in search of Sita, lamenting woefully and asking them for hints that could help him locate her. He asked them, ‘Oh Birds, Animals and swarm of Bees! Have any of you seen Sita who has eyes like that of a fawn?’ [The Lord’s attention was drawn to all the pretty insects, birds, animals and plants as well as lightening and the full moon as he asked them about Sita, because they reminded the Lord of her.] The wagtail, the parrot, the pigeon, the deer, the fish, the bees, the clever cuckoo (who sang sweetly), the buds of the jasmine flower, the pomegranate, the lightening in the sky, the lotus, the full moon of the autumn night, the gliding serpent, the noose of Varun (the God of water), the bow of Cupid, the swan, the elephant and the lion, the wood apple tree and the golden coloured banana plant—all of them felt honoured when they drew the Lord’s attention and got praise from him. Lord Ram was lost in the thoughts of Sita as he woefully said, ‘Look oh Sita, these plants and animals are teasing me in your absence. Don’t you feel jealous of them? Why don’t you reveal yourself instantly so that my attention gets diverted from them?’ ”]

सीय बरन सम केतकि अति हियँ हारि ।
कहेसि भँवर कर हरवा हृदय बिदारि ।।32।।

sīya barana sama kētaki ati hiyaṁ hāri.
kahēsi bhamvara kara haravā hr̥daya bidāri..32..

32-Lord Ram observed with a somber mood, ‘Comparing its own beauty, magnificence, charm and glamour with that of Sita, and becoming hopelessly dejected and despaired at

its own inferiority, the Ketak flower (the fragrant flower of the plant called *Pandarnus Odoratissimus*) tore at its heart in despair and wore a garland of black bees as a token of its regret and gloom.'

[This flower is surrounded by black bees which are attracted to it because of its sweet fragrance. The Lord alludes to this natural phenomenon and observes that Sita has now been surrounded by gloom and despair just like the Ketak plant which is surrounded by black bees inspite of it being so beautiful to look at.]

सीतलता ससि की रहि सब जग छाड़ ।
अगिनि ताप है हम कहँ सँचरत आइ ।।33 ।।

sītalatā sasi kī rahi saba jaga chā'i.
agini tāpa hvai hama kaham̐ sam̐carata ā'i..33..

33-[Lord Sri Ram tells Laxman—] 'The moon is very cool and its rays spread in all the directions of the world to sooth everyone and provide peace and solace to troubled souls, but the same moonlight acquires the heat of fire when it falls on our bodies as we feel agitated and annoyed by it.'

[The moonlight is unable to provide any comfort and solace to Lord Ram and his brother Laxman who are extremely tormented and grieved by the abduction of Sita. When a person is emotionally upset and overwhelmed by grief, nothing looks appealing to him. Even the most harmless of things irritate him, and what normally would be attractive for him only ignites loathe and anger in his heart. He wishes to be left alone; he does not like anything or any contact no matter how good intentioned it may be.

In the present case, Lord Ram does not like the sight of the full moon or its soothing light as they torment his heart by stoking the memory of the good days when Sita was with him. The agony and the pain of separation from Sita become unbearable for the Lord, and he wishes that there was no moon or its light to aggravate his sufferings.]

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Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

किष्किन्धाकाण्ड

kiṣkindhākāṇḍa

[Kishkindha Kand is the fourth Canto of the story of The Ramayana. It is so-named after the geographical area where the next phase of the story unfolds. Lord Ram and his brother went deeper into the forest and headed in the southern direction in search of Sita. By-and-by they reached the foot of a mountain known as Rishyamook on the outskirts of the kingdom of Kishkindha, the monkey kingdom ruled by their king Bali. Bali had banished his younger brother Sugriv from the kingdom due to some misunderstanding between the brothers, so he fled and lived atop this mountain with his companions.

When Sugriv saw Lord Ram and Laxman wandering below, he wanted to investigate who they were. So he sent his trusted minister Hanuman to find out. Hanuman met Lord Ram and the two struck an immediate bond of affection for each other as Hanuman recognised at the subtle level of the Spirit that Lord Ram was the one whom he had always wished to meet and serve.

Hence, Hanuman took the two brothers to meet his master Sugriv, and there forged a bond of friendship between them. The following two verses refer to this meeting.]

स्याम गौर दोउ मूरति लछिमन राम ।
इन तें भइ सित कीरति अति अभिराम ॥ 34 ॥

syāma gaura dō'u mūrati lachimana rāma.
ina tēm̐ bha'i sita kīrati ati abhirāma..34..

34-[Hanuman introduced Lord Sri Ram and Laxman to Sugriv, his master, and said—]
‘These dark and fair complexioned brothers are named Sri Ram and Laxman respectively. The patron goddess of the virtue of ‘Kirti’ (fame, glory, reputation, honour,

celebrity status, merit etc.) has found her importance, her greatness, her powers and her majesty because of their blessing.’

[To wit, since Lord Ram is the Supreme Being himself personified, these grand virtues of the world derive their inherent glory from the Lord. If anyone acquires these virtues that come under the overall definition of ‘Kirti’ then surely it is because the Lord has blessed him with them.

Hanuman praised the Lord to impress upon Sugriv that it will be in his interest to make friends with Lord Ram and Laxman. He also wished to remove Sugriv’s doubts and fears about the two brothers. Sugriv had thought that they were spies sent by his elder brother Bali to trace where he had hid himself after being banished from the kingdom. So it was necessary for Hanuman to address his concerns first before any bonding of friendship could take effect.

Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 4.]

कुजन पाल गुन बर्जित अकुल अनाथ ।
कहहु कृपानिधि राउर कस गुन गाथ ॥35 ॥

kujana pāla guna barjita akula anātha.
kahahu krpānidhi rā'ura kasa guna gātha..35..

35-[Sugriv trusted Hanuman, and so he was convinced of Lord Ram’s greatness. He said to the Lord—] ‘Oh the one who is an ocean of mercy, kindness and grace (krpānidhi)! How can I describe your glories and virtues—you are the only one who can protect someone like me who is evil, wicked and lacking in good virtues and characters, who has a lowly birth, and who is a destitute.’

[Sugriv is being very modest and humble here because no one should be boastful before the Lord of the World. He felt himself blessed at his acquaintance with Lord Ram—refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 4.

It ought to be noted here that all other events that are usually narrated as part of Kishkindha Kand in the different versions of the story of the Ramayana have been skipped by Tulsidas in this book ‘Barvai Ramayan’. It has already been pointed out earlier that in this book the poet Tulsidas has selected only certain landmark events to outline the story of Lord Ram, and has skipped details. The highlight of Kishkindha Kand is Lord Ram meeting Sugriv and making friendship with him—because this friendship helped the Lord to send messengers in large numbers to search for Sita in all the directions of the earth, something he couldn’t do himself individually. When she was found in Lanka, this friendship with Sugriv helped the Lord to assemble a huge army of monkeys and bears to launch a campaign to free her from captivity of the demons. So this

event—meeting of Hanuman and friendship with Sugriv—is the corner-stone of Kishkindha Kand.]

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Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

सुन्दरकाण्ड

sundarakāṇḍa

[Sundar Kand is the fifth Canto of the story of The Ramayana. It describes how Hanuman had leapt across the mighty ocean to land on the island of Lanka, how he discovered Sita held in captivity there, his meeting with her, how he was captured by the demon warriors, the bitter arguments he had with Ravana, and why and how he had burnt the golden city of Lanka before returning back to report to Lord Ram and Sugriv about his successful enterprise of discovering Sita. The Lord then assembled a huge army of monkeys and bears led by their king Sugriv to launch a brave campaign to go to Lanka and free Sita, destroying the demons in the process and fulfilling the promise the Lord had made to the Gods and Mother Earth on an earlier occasion that he would come down to earth to free it from the dreadful scourge of the evil demons.

In the following verses we read about the conversation that Hanuman had with Sita when he met her at Lanka, and about Hanuman coming back to report about her to Lord Ram.]

बिरह आगि उर ऊपर जब अधिकाई ।
ए अँखियाँ दोउ बैरिनि देहिं बुझाइ ॥३६॥

biraha āgi ura ūpara jaba adhikā'ī.
ē am̐khiyām̐ dō'u bairini dēhiṁ bujhā'i..36..

36-[Hanuman met Sita inside the garden where she was held captive by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. Sita expresses her profound sense of sorrow, her deep pain and a sense of utter hopelessness and dismay in verse nos. 36-39 herein below.]

‘Whenever the fire representing the agonies, sorrows and grief of separation (from Lord Ram) is ignited afresh in my heart, then each time these two enemy-like eyes of mine pour water-like tears to douse the flame. [This prevents me from finding liberation and deliverance from my miseries, torments and grief by burning to death. To wit, if I stop crying, perhaps it would be easier for me to die.]

[Sita explains why she has not been able to die due the fire kindled by separation from her Lord and the accompanying sufferings. She continues to cry endlessly, and this helps her to calm down. It is observed that when one is under great agony and suffering huge emotional stress due to loss of someone very dear then if that person cries it helps him or her to tide over the emotional crises more easily as compared to a situation when one turns stone-dumb. Crying is a great antidote to emotional stress and the body’s natural buffer against complete psychological and emotional breakdown which may have catastrophic consequences, often leading to permanent depression, suicidal tendencies and damage to the recovery abilities of the brain.

In this verse, the eyes are compared to the enemy because they pour water in the form of tears that stops Sita from burning herself to death in the fire of agony and pain of separation from her beloved Lord Sri Ram.

A similar idea is expressed vividly in the epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’, but here the context is different. Here this conversation between Sita and Hanuman is referred to by the latter when he described Sita’s condition to Lord Ram after coming back and reporting his successful mission to the Lord. Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 30 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-7 that follow it.

It has also been described in very poignant terms in Tulsidas’ another great book titled ‘Geetawali’, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 17-20. This book Geetawali is also a version of the story of the Ramayana composed in the form of a poetry that can be sung in different Raagas or tunes of classical Indian music. An English version of this full book has already been published by me, the author of this present book Barvai Ramayan, and it is available in ebook and printed book formats on-line.]

डहकनि है उजिअरिया निसि नहिं घाम ।
जगत जरत अस लागु मोहि बिनु राम ॥ ३७ ॥

ḍahakani hai uji'ariyā nisi nahim ghāma.
jagata jarata asa lāgu mōhi binu rāma..37..

37-[Alluding to the soothing moonlight, she says—] ‘This moonlight that spreads over the world during the night is not cool, comforting and soothing for me as it should ordinarily be. It is rather like the scorching sunlight of the day. The whole world appears to be on fire for me without Lord Sri Ram.’

[Refer to verse no. 33 herein above where a similar grief emotional agony is expressed by Lord Ram when he looks at the full moon and its light.

When Hanuman returned and reported Sita's condition to Lord Ram, he cited this particular emotion of Sita. Refer verse no. 41 herein below.]

अब जीवन कै है कपि आस न कोइ ।
कनगुरिया कै मुदरी कंकन होइ ।।38 ।।

aba jivana kai hai kapi āsa na kō'i.
kanaguriyā kai mudarī kaṅkana hō'i..38..

38-[Addressing Hanuman, Sita says—] 'Hanuman! There is no hope of my surviving any longer. You can see it for yourself that my finger-ring has become like a bracelet. [To wit, I have become so emaciated and withered that my arms and wrists are almost like a straw as they have become extremely lean and thin so much so that even the small finger-ring can easily slide up to my wrists or higher even up my forearms right up to my shoulders.]'

[This verse tells the reader how thin and emaciated Sita had become. Her arms had become like a straw so much so that the ring that fits into a finger could now slide up her arms.]

राम सुजस कर चहु जुग होत प्रचार ।
असुरन कहँ लखि लागत जग अँधियार ।।39 ।।

rāma sujasa kara cahu juga hōta pracāra.
asurana kaham' lakhi lāgata jaga am'dhiyāra..39..

39-[Sita continues to lament when she says—] 'Lord Sri Ram's glories, invincibility, power, the strength of his arms and matchless valour are famous and well known in all the eras of time known as the four Yugas. But seeing the demons and their strength and valour as well as the way they have managed to abduct and hold me captive in a fearless manner, and the way they spread terror and horrify the world with impunity, it appears to me that there is darkness all over the world. [To wit, though it is true that Lord Ram is famous as an invincible warrior and is famed for his valour and strength of arms, but the demons are no less powerful. See for yourself how the demons have fearlessly and with impunity kept me captive, and the Lord has not been able to do anything at all till now. This has made me skeptic about the truth of the Lord's powers, strength and valour.]'

[Here, Sita has virtually challenged Lord Ram to come and rescue her from the clutches of the demons. Any brave and self-respecting warrior would not tolerate that his own wife says that her husband's valour and strength is under question against the might of his enemy. By these caustic remarks that appear to be disparaging on their face about the

reputation of the Lord, Sita actually wishes to spur Lord Ram into taking action instead of just procrastinating and leaving things to providence and destiny. That would be open cowardice and defeat on part of the Lord who is renowned for his unmatched bravery and valour in the face of an enemy, especially one who has abducted his wife. It would be completely unthinkable for Lord Ram that he would do nothing even after finding out who has abducted Sita and where she was held captive.]

सिय बियोग दुख केहि बिधि कहउँ बखानि ।
फूल बान ते मनसिज बेधत आनि ॥ 40 ॥

siya biyōga dukha kēhi bidhi kaha'um̐ bakhāni.
phūla bāna tē manasija bēdhata āni..40..

40-[Upon his return to Kishkindha, Hanuman reported to Lord Ram and described the misery of Sita as follows—] ‘How can I describe the anguish, sorrow, grief, troubles and tribulations of Sita?

Kamdeo (cupid) constantly pierces her with arrows made of flowers (i.e. she is consistently suffering from the agonies that arise from her separation from you).’

[Kamdeo is the patron god of love. Hanuman means that Sita loves Lord Ram and she remembers the Lord every single moment of her existence.

Refer also to ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 30—to Doha no. 31; and ‘Geetawali’, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 17-20.]

सरद चाँदनी सँचरत चहुँ दिसि आनि ।
बिधुहि जोरि कर बिनवति कुलगुरु जानि ॥ 41 ॥

sarada cām̐danī sam̐carata cahum̐ disi āni.
bidhuhi jōri kara binavati kulaguru jāni..41..

41-[Hanuman continued to describe the miserable condition of Sita in a very poignant manner—] ‘When the moonlight of a winter's full moon spreads in all the directions, then it appears like the scorching light of the mid-day sun to her. Thinking that the moon is like the patron god of her family (i.e. she begins to treat the moon as the ‘sun’), she prays to it and beseeches it to somehow extricate her from her ordeals, and allow her freedom from her wretched and miserable condition by letting her burn herself to death).’

[In this context, refer verse no. 37 herein above.

Lord Ram was born in the ‘solar race’. Hence, the ‘sun’ is treated as the patron god of his family. Sita is so dazed and confused that she begins to mix things up—

thinking that the moon is the 'sun'. Even the soothing moonlight is intolerable for her. It reminds her of the scorching light of the sun.]

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Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

लंकाकाण्ड

laṅkākāṇḍa

[Lanka Kand is the sixth Canto of the story of The Ramayana. As the name itself suggests, it deals with the events that unfolded at Lanka when Lord Ram and his army launched a campaign to free Sita from the demons. This epic war led to the killing of Ravana, the demon king, along with the majority of the demons of his race who were cruel and sinful. However, some of the demons led by Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana, survived as they were not sinful inspite of having the body of a demon.

In our present book ‘Barvai Ramayan’ however, Tulsidas just hints at this campaign instead of describing the war in detail by referring to the huge army of Lord Ram that had assembled on the soil of Lanka in the following verse.]

बिबिध बाहिनी बिलसति सहित अनंत ।
जलधि सरिस को कहै राम भगवंत ।।42।।

bibidha bāhinī bilasati sahita ananta.
jaladhi sarisa kō kahai rāma bhagavanta..42..

42-The huge army of bears and monkeys in myriad formations and consisting of all types of members (i.e. consisting of different categories of bears and monkeys—young and old, novices and experts, sober and excited, some joining for the fun of it while others who were professional warriors, some were serious while some were just making merry of the situation, some had joined under compulsion while others had joined voluntarily, some were like mercenaries and others were loyal soldiers who had joined the campaign out of

loyalty, devotion and duty) looked marvelous along with 'Anant' (Laxman, the bother of Lord Ram) who led it as its commander.

Say, who can compare the army of the Lord (Sri Ram) even with an ocean?

[The army of Lord Ram consisting of monkeys and bears was so huge and formidable that it appeared as if it was an endless ocean of warriors, stretching from one corner of the horizon to the other, covering the surface of the earth as far afield as the eyes could see. But since Lord Ram was its head and it was called a 'Ram's army', even this comparison or allusion is not proper. After all, the ocean has its boundaries and limits—it ends where the land begins, but Sri Ram's glorious and magnificent army was as endless in dimension and as measureless in strength and powers as the Lord's glory itself.

The head of the army was 'Anant'. This refers to the legendary Shesh-nath, the serpent on whose back Lord Vishnu reclines on the ocean of milk in the celestial world, and who supports the world from below upon its hood. This Shesh-nath had manifested himself as Laxman.

Here the poet has played on the word 'Anant' which literally means 'one without an end'. Hence, Lord Ram's army was one that had no end.]

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Barvai Ramayan

Of Goswami Tulsidas

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

उत्तरकाण्ड

uttarakāṇḍa

[Uttar Kand is the seventh and the last Canto of the story of The Ramayana. In the original version of the story this Canto describes the return of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman from the forest after fourteen years, the Lord's anointment as the King-Emperor of the Ayodhya, and the events thereafter.

But in this book 'Barvai Ramayan', the poet Tulsidas skips all these events, and instead chooses to focus on the glories and virtues of Lord Ram with a special emphasis on the Lord's divinity and how a devotee can benefit spiritually by being devoted to the Lord, by worshipping him and surrendering before him.

There is another wonderful book by Tulsidas in which the same pattern is followed in Uttar Kand. This book is called 'Kavitawali' or 'Kavitawali Ramayan'. In this book a pattern similar to Barvai Ramayan is adopted, though the system of composing the verses differs as they are written in the poetical system known as 'Kavitta' as compared to 'Barvai Chand' in our present book Barvai Ramayan.

The general idea expressed by Tulsidas in all the verses of Uttar Kand is to deliver a spiritual message to a living being. Through these verses the saint-poet exhorts the mind and the heart to have devotion and love for Lord Ram, the Supreme Being in a personified form, to rely on the Lord and have faith in the powers of the Lord's Holy Name as this would help one to attain peace and happiness in life as well as liberation and deliverance from this mortal world to find eternal emancipation and salvation for the soul.

It is to be noted that Tulsidas has extolled the glory and spiritual importance of Lord Ram's Holy Name at every opportunity he found. One can specially refer to (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 28; (b) 'Kavitawli', Uttar Kand, verse nos. 83-110; and (iii) 'Vinai Patrika', verse nos. 46, 65-70.]

चित्रकूट पय तीर सो सुरतरु बास ।
लखन राम सिय सुमिरहु तुलसीदास । 43 ।।

citrakūṭa paya tīra sō surataru bāsa.
lakhana rāma siya sumirahu tulasīdāsa..43..

43-To stay under any tree along the banks of the river Payaswani (also known as river Mandakani) in Chitrakoot is akin to living under the Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree of the gods in the heaven).

Tulsidas addresses himself and says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart. You should always remember and submerge yourself in the thoughts of Laxman, Lord Sri Ram and Sita.’

[We note here that Laxman has been placed first, Sita last, and Lord Ram in the middle. In order to understand what Tulsidas means, we must visualize an equilateral triangle, with Laxman, Sri Ram and Sita marking the three corners of this triangle.

Laxman is put in the first place, meaning that single-minded pursuit of devotion, service, unflinching loyalty, the ability to put the Lord's work and the Lord on a superior pedestal than any and all the rest of the things in this world, including self-interest, are praise-worthy virtues that need to be practiced by all just like Laxman had practiced them himself. Laxman here stands as an example worth emulating by all living beings who are devoted to the Lord and wish to learn how to serve him with faith and love. He marks the first corner of this equilateral triangle.

Sita is in the third place—or the third corner of the equilateral triangle—symbolizing the sort of affection, love, endearment and yearning one should have for the Lord. Sita represents the cosmic Maya (the power of the Supreme Lord to create delusions).

Lord Sri Ram himself represents the Supreme Being. Symbolically he represents the top corner of this equilateral triangle in which all the sides and angles are equal—symbolizing no difference between the three of them, Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita. But at the same time it is not denying that Lord Ram is the chief Lord as he represents the apex of this triangle.

But that ‘apex’ rests on the two essential corners represented by Laxman and Sita. This triangle can be turned on any of its limbs, but the shape would always be the same. The name that one assigns to any such triangle, such as the corners A, B or C, are just for the purpose of understanding and analysis, but essentially there is no difference between any of them.

In other words, the Supreme Being known as Brahm in the Upanishads and as Lord Vishnu in the Purans, the Jiva who is the living being born in this world, and Maya that creates this world on the inspiration of the Lord, are all linked to one another. The creation must have all of them to be complete and be known as the ‘creation and the living world’. Just like the triangle would cease to exist if any of its sides or angles are removed, this creation would cease to exist if any of the three elements that constitute it

are removed from the scene. The author hopes that the spiritual and metaphysical import of this triangle sinks in the mind and heart of the reader.

By putting the name of Lord Sri Ram in the centre in this verse, Tulsidas implies that the Lord is the axle around which the entire wheel of creation revolves.]

पय नहाइ फल खाहु परिहरिय आस ।
सीय राम पद सुमिरहु तुलसीदास ॥ 44 ॥

paya nahā'i phala khāhu parihariya āsa.
sīya rāma pada sumirahu tulasīdāsa..44..

44-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Have a bath in the river Payaswani, subsist by eating fruits, and having abandoned all expectations and hopes (from this world), you should constantly remember the holy feet of Sita and Lord Sri Ram.’

स्वारथ परमारथ हित एक उपाय ।
सीय राम पद तुलसी प्रेम बढ़ाय ॥ 45 ॥

svāratha paramāratha hita ēka upāya.
sīya rāma pada tulasī prēma baḍhāya..45..

45-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! For serving worldly self-interests known as ‘svāratha’, as well as to take care of the well-being of the soul and ensuring its emancipation and salvation known as ‘paramāratha’, there is only one way—and that is to enhance love and devotion for the holy feet of Sita and Lord Ram.’

काल कराल बिलोकहु होइ सचेत ।
राम नाम जपु तुलसी प्रीति समेत ॥ 46 ॥

kāla karāla bilōkahu hō'i sacēta.
rāma nāma japu tulasī prīti samēta..46..

46-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Be careful and vigilant that the terrible Kaal (death) is visible right in front of you visible (i.e. death is imminent; it can come to grab you at any time). So, repeat and chant Lord Sri Ram's holy name constantly with love, faith and devotion.’

संकट सोच बिमोचन मंगल गेह ।
तुलसी राम नाम पर करिय सनेह ।।47।।

saṅkaṭa sōca bimōcana maṅgala gēha.
tulasī rāma nāma para kariya sanēha..47..

47-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! One should have deep and abiding affection, love, faith and devotion for Lord Sri Ram's holy name which is the destroyer (eliminator) of all types of sorrows, miseries, grief and gloom. This holy name is an abode (treasury) of all auspiciousness, welfare and well-being.’

कलि नहिं ग्यान बिराग न जोग समाधि ।
राम नाम जपु तुलसी नित निरुपाधि ।।48।।

kali nahim gyāna birāga na jōga samādhi.
rāma nāma japu tulasī nita nirupādhi..48..

48-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! During Kaliyug (the current era of the 4-era cycle of creation and destruction), it is not possible to have Gyan (gnosis; wisdom, erudition and knowledge of the essential universal spiritual Truths) or Vairagya (detachment, dispassion and renunciation from the material world), and neither is it possible to do Yoga (meditative practices and contemplation) nor attain Samadhi (a trance-like state of consciousness where one loses awareness of the external world and is submerged in eternal bliss).

Therefore, the only easily available way (to attain abiding peace and happiness as well as bliss and emancipation) is to constantly chant and always remember Lord Ram's holy name (which is the one-stop destination to have for all spiritual welfare and happiness).’

[Refer also to: (a) ‘Kavitawali’, Uttar Kand, verse no. 86; and (b) ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 78 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that follow it; (ii) Doha no. 102; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 103; and Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 22; (ii) Doha no. 26 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that follow it. All these verses precisely reiterate what has been advised in our present verse no. 48 herein above.]

राम नाम दुइ आखर हिउँ हितु जान ।
राम लखन सम तुलसी सिखब न आन ।।49।।

rāma nāma du'i ākhara hiyam̐ hitu jāna.
rāma lakhana sama tulasī sikhāba na āna..49..

49-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Regard the two letters (RA and MA) of Lord Ram's holy name as representing Lord Sri Ram and Laxman (his brother) respectively, and do not allow any other advice to find place in your heart (or mislead you).’

[Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 20.

Lord Ram's name has two letters—viz. ‘Raa’ (‘Rā’; pronounced as in the English word *rather*) and ‘Ma’ (pronounced as in the English word *mother*). Here, the poet says that the first letter ‘Raa’ stands for Lord Ram, and the second letter ‘Ma’ stands for Laxman. He means that both the brothers love each other so much that they are always together and inseparable from one another.

From a more philosophical perspective we can interpret this to mean that creation and its conclusion are inseparable from one another—i.e. that which has come into being must end one day. In this analogy, Lord Ram represents ‘creation and its sustenance’ because the letter ‘Raa’ symbolically represents this phase of creation, while Laxman represents its ‘conclusion’ because the letter ‘Ma’ represents the termination of creation.

How do we deduce this? Well, the pronounce the letter ‘Raa’ we have to open our mouth, implying waking up (when a man yawns) and the rise of a new day, and when we say ‘Ma’ we close our mouth implying sleep or death or the end of the day. This is also what the Upanishads endorse. Refer: Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition.]

माय बाप गुरु स्वामि राम कर नाम ।
तुलसी जेहि न सोहाइ ताहि बिधि बाम ।।50 ।।

māya bāpa guru svāmi rāma kara nāma.
tulasī jēhi na sōhā'i tāhi bidhi bāma..50..

50-Addressing himself, Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Lord Ram's holy name is akin to a father, a mother, a Guru and a Lord for you¹. Those who do not like this advice are very unfortunate. It appears that the Creator is opposed to them so much so that he has corrupted their wisdom so that they would continue to wallow in the murky waters of this tormenting world of delusions and sufferings.’

[To wit, such unfortunate people who do not treat Lord Ram's holy name as their best friend and the best means of attaining happiness and spiritual welfare in this world can never have liberation and deliverance from the miseries associated with this mortal

world. They can never hope to find emancipation and salvation of their soul. They continue to remain trapped in this world in a perpetual way.

¹Refer: (a) 'Vinai Patrika' of Tulsidas, verse no. 79, stanza no. 3; verse no. 28, stanza no. 6; verse no. 77, stanza no. 2; verse no. 220, stanza no. 2; and (b) 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 47.]

राम नाम जपु तुलसी होइ बिसोक ।
लोक सकल कल्याण नीक परलोक ।। 51 ।।

rāma nāma japu tulasī hō'i bisōka.
lōka sakala kalyāna nīka paralōka..51..

51-Tulsidas says—'Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Recite Lord Ram's holy name and be free from all sorrows and worries. This will result in all types of welfare in this world as well as the 'other world' for you.'

[Here Tulsidas means that a person would get emancipation and salvation for his soul and find liberation and deliverance from the shackles of the cycle of birth and death if one constantly remembers the Lord and repeats his holy name.

A similar idea is expressed in 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 20.]

तप तीरथ मख दान नेम उपबास ।
सब ते अधिक राम जपु तुलसीदास ।। 52 ।।

tapa tīratha makha dāna nēma upabāsa.
saba tē adhika rāma japu tulasīdāsa..52..

52-Tulsidas says—'Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Recite the name of Lord Ram which is superior in providing spiritual rewards as compared to the cumulative benefits that are got by doing Tapa (austerities, penances), Tirtha (pilgrimage), Makha (various Yagyas or fire sacrifices and other religious rituals), Daan (making charity), Nema (following established rules and procedures), and Upwaas (fasting).'

[An exactly similar idea is expressed in 'Ram Charit Manas', Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 126. (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 130.]

महिमा राम नाम कै जान महेस ।
देत परम पद कासीं करि उपदेस ॥53॥

mahimā rāma nāma kai jāna mahēsa.
dēta parama pada kāśīṁ kari upadēsa..53..

53-Lord Shiva knows the potential spiritual powers, the astounding glories, the great fame and the grand eclectic virtues of Lord Ram's holy name, for he gives this advice of repeating and relying on the name of Lord Sri Ram to a dying person at Kashi (Varanasi).

[It is believed that when a man dies in Varanasi, also known as Kashi, the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva and a famed pilgrim city of India, Lord Shiva utters the holy name of Lord Sri Ram, i.e. the word 'RAM', in his ears. This immediately unshackles the dying man's soul from the fetters of his sins and provides the man with liberation and deliverance. This is called 'Mukti'.

Refer: (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108; and (b) 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 108 (stanza no. 2), and verse no. 152 (stanza no. 11) which also say the same thing.]

जान आदि कबि तुलसी नाम प्रभाउ ।
उलटा जपत कोल ते भए रिषि राउ ॥54॥

jāna ādi kabi tulasī nāma prabhā'u.
ulaṭā japata kōla tē bha'ē riṣi rā'u..54..

54-Tulsidas says that the ancient poet Valmiki had known the potential effects of Lord Ram's divine name because by chanting it in the reverse order (as Mara instead of Ram) he had transformed himself from a cruel Kol (a tribal hunter) into an exalted sage.

[Refer: (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19; (b) 'Geetawali', Sundar Kand, verse no. 40 (stanza no. 3); (c) 'Vinai Patrika', verse nos. 151 (stanza no. 7), verse nos. 156 (stanza no. 2), and verse nos. 247 (stanza no. 3).

Valmiki is the sage who had first written the divine story of Lord Ram that came to be known as the famous epic 'Ramayana'. He was also the sage in whose hermitage Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, had spent her last days in exile where the Lord's two sons Lav and Kush were born. He was a cruel hunter, but one day he was advised by sages Sankaadi that no one would share the burden of sins and their horrifying consequences that he has been accumulating for himself. Valmiki was taken aback. When he asked the sages for a way out of his predicament and how he can now obtain freedom from his sins, the sages advised him to do meditation using Lord Ram's holy name. Valmiki replied

that he is so sinful that he cannot do that, so the sages told him to repeat the holy name in the reverse order. By obeying their advice, Valmiki not only attained enlightenment but became the famed author of the story of Lord Ram's life and time when he penned the Ramayana. Besides this, Lord Ram himself visited him in his hermitage during the Lord's sojourn into the forest to eliminate the cruel demon race.]

कलसजोनि जियँ जानेउ नाम प्रतापु ।
कौतुक सागर सोखेउ करि जियँ जापु ।।55 ।।

kalasajōni jiyam̐ jānē'u nāma pratāpu.
kautuka sāgara sōkhē'u kari jiyam̐ jāpu..55..

55-Sage Agastya had realised the glory and potent of Lord Ram's holy name in his heart, for he had invoked it, and on its strength he had dried up the ocean in a playful manner (i.e. without the least effort).

[The story goes that once when Indra had killed the demon Vrittaasur, the other demons led by 'Kaaleya' managed to escape and they hid themselves under the water of the ocean. From there they began terrorizing the sages and saints on earth. They stayed under water during daytime and came out at night to torment and devour these sages, and generally cause nuisance and havoc all around. These demons had not spared even such renowned sages of the time as Vashistha, Chyavan and Bharadwaj, because the demons attacked their hermitages and killed the junior sages and seers who lived there. It was then that the Gods, led by their king Indra, requested sage Agastya to somehow expose the demons. At this request the sage had scooped up the water of the ocean in a cup made by joining the two palms of his hands and had drunk the water of the ocean in one gulp so as to expose the demons. The Gods were then able to destroy them. Some of the demons however managed to escape and hid themselves in the nether world. This is how the demon race survived then.

However, when the ocean was completely dried up, it created another problem for the world because countless marine creatures began to suffer and die. Besides this, the ocean was the largest natural reservoir of water on earth. So the Gods requested sage Agastya to refill it. The sage replied that the water has been digested in his stomach, but he can oblige the Gods by reproducing the ocean in the form of urine. That is the reason, according to this legendary story of the Purans, why the ocean is corroding, salty and sour—because it is the urine of sage Agastya.

This fact, that the ocean is corroding, sour and salty because it is the urine of sage Agastya is explicitly narrated in the Anand Ramayan (purported to have been written by sage Valmiki), in its Vilaas Kand (Chapter), ninth Sarga (Canto), verse nos. 18-24 where Sita explains to Lopaamudraa, the wife of sage Agastya, why Sri Ram had constructed the bridge in order to cross the ocean to reach Lanka. She explained that the Lord did not ask the sage to dry up the ocean once again by drinking its water because it would be unthinkable to ask the sage to drink his own urine. Even if the sage had actually drunk the water, the Lord would be heaped with the ignominy of being so selfish that he made a

Brahmin drink his own urine so that his purpose is served. The Lord did not swim across the ocean because it would be insulting and extremely disgusting for the Lord to swim in urine, and it would also be improper for him to step across a Brahmin's urine because it is to be regarded as holy as the urine of a cow.]

तुलसी सुमिरत राम सुलभ फल चारि ।
बेद पुरान पुकारत कहत पुरारि ।।56 ।।

tulasī sumirata rāma sulabha phala cāri.
bēda purāna pukārata kahata purāri..56..

56-Tulsidas says that the four fruits for all meritorious deeds done in this world (i.e. Artha, Dharma, Kaam, Moksha)¹ are easily available by merely remembering Lord Sri Ram's holy name. This fact is asserted clearly and proclaimed unequivocally by the Vedas, as well as is endorsed by Lord Shiva².

[¹The four fruits for good deeds are the following—‘Artha’ or material prosperity and wealth; ‘Dharma’ or acquisition of the virtues of righteousness, probity and propriety; ‘Kaam’ or fulfillment of desires; and ‘Moksha’ or spiritual emancipation and deliverance.

²Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Doha no. 25.]

राम नाम पर तुलसी नेह निबाहु ।
एहि ते अधिक न एहि सम जीवन लाहु ।।57 ।।

rāma nāma para tulasī nēha nibāhu.
ēhi tē adhika na ēhi sama jīvana lāhu..57..

57-Extolling the greatness and glory of Lord Ram's holy name, Tulsidas says that one should have abiding endearment, love, affection and devotion for the Lord's holy name. What to talk of being greater than this reward, no other benefit or reward can ever become even an equal to it in this world.

दोस दुरित दुख दारिद दाहक नाम ।
सकल सुमंगल दायक तुलसी राम ।।58 ।।

dōsa durita dukha dārida dāhaka nāma.
sakala sumaṅgala dāyaka tulasī rāma..58..

58-Tulsidas says that Lord Ram's holy name can, on the one hand, burn (destroy or eliminate) all faults, sins, sorrows, miseries, wants and poverties that torment a person, and on the other hand it can bestow all auspiciousness, goodness, good fortunes, welfare and well-being that exist in this world.

केहि गिनती मह गिनती जस बन घास ।
राम जपत भए तुलसी तुलसीदास ।।59 ।।

kēhi ginatī maha ginatī jasa bana ghāsa.
rāma japata bha'e tulasī tulasīdāsa..59..

59-[Talking about himself and his past, Tulsidas says—] ‘What did I count and what was my standing in the society? My condition was like the wild grass in the forest (which is uncared for, trampled upon, and worthless). But by chanting (reciting or constantly remembering) Lord Sri Ram's divine name, I have become as pure, revered and exalted as the Tulsi (Basil) plant¹.’

[¹The Tulsi plant is much respected in India as it is a sacred plant because it is dear to Lord Vishnu. In this verse, Tulsidas is playing with the word ‘Tulsi’ in his name. Earlier in life, the saint had to suffer a lot, having to beg for even basic meals. But when he started relying on the Lord’s holy name ‘Ram’ he became very famous even during his lifetime.

The humility, simplicity and piety of Tulsidas, and his absolute faith and devotion for Lord Ram, as well as the fact that he credits the Lord for whatever he is and whatever he has in this world is reiterated by him in his other books too. For instance we have ‘Vinai Patrika’, which is a marvelous book of prayers. It has a wide swathe of verses in which we read that Tulsidas has expressed a similar emotion as done in the present verse of Barvai Ramayan—e.g. verse nos. 95-96, 109-110, 114, 117-118, 142-143, 158-160, 171, 208 etc.

In ‘Kavitawali’ too Tulsidas has used a similar method to pray to Lord Ram in its Uttar Kand. Refer specially to verse nos. 46-82.

It ought to be noted that English versions of both these books has already been published by this humble author, and they are available in ebook as well as printed book formats for order on-line if the reader so wants.]

आगम निगम पुरान कहत करि लीक ।
तुलसी राम नाम कर सुमिरन नीक ।।60 ।।

āgama nigama purāna kahata kari līka.
tulasī rāma nāma kara sumirana nīka..60..

60-Tulsidas says that the Aagam (Tantra Shastra), Nigam (Vedas) and Purans (ancient mythological histories of the Hindus) have underlined the fact (i.e. they have all unanimously declared) that remembering Lord Ram's holy name is the best path of all spiritual paths to be followed by a seeker in this world.

[Refer: 'Ram Charit Manas', Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 12-14 that precede Doha no. 122.]

सुमिरहु नाम राम कर सेवहु साधु ।
तुलसी उतरि जाहु भव उदधि अगाधु ।।61।।

sumirahu nāma rāma kara sēvahu sādhu.
tulasī utari jāhu bhava udadhi agādhu..61..

61-Tulsidas advises that one should constantly remember Lord Sri Ram's holy name, and serve people who are saintly, holy, pious and righteous. In this way one can easily get to the other side of the 'Bhavsagar' (bhava udadhi).

[The words 'bhava udadhi' literally mean an 'ocean' that symbolizes this mundane, deluding and entrapping 'world' of mortal existence that consists of an endless cycle of birth and death. This 'gross world of transmigration' is considered to be like an 'endless ocean' because there seems to be no end of it in sight.

Tulsidas says that the only way to cross this seemingly endless ocean is to take the help of Lord Ram's holy name as it acts as a sturdy ship that can easily and certainly take a person to the other side. It means that Lord Ram's holy name will provide liberation and deliverance to the soul of the devotee and ensure that he gets emancipation and salvation.]

कामधेनु हरि नाम कामतरु राम ।
तुलसी सुलभ चारि फल सुमिरत नाम ।।62।।

kāmadhēnu hari nāma kāmataru rāma.
tulasī sulabha cāri phala sumirata nāma..62..

62-Tulsidas says that the name of Lord Ram is like a (all wish-fulfilling) Kamdhenu cow, while the Lord's form is akin to the (all wish-fulfilling) Kalpa Tree. Merely by constantly

remembering Lord Ram's holy name, all the four fruits (Artha, Dharma, Kaam and Moksha) are easily accessible (to the devotee).

[The 'Kamdhenu cow' is the cow of Gods. It is believed that by serving it one can be blessed with all the things one desires. Similarly, the 'Kalpa Tree' is a wish fulfilling tree of the Gods; all the things that are desired by a person are obtained by worshipping this tree.

The 'four fruits' that stand for all the best of rewards that one can expect for one's meritorious deeds done in life have been described in verse no. 56.

Refer also to: (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 26; Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27; (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 102; (b) 'Dohawali', verse no. 27-28, 76, 183, 215, 218.]

तुलसी कहत सुनत सब समुझत कोय ।
बड़े भाग अनुराग राम सन होय ।।63।।

tulasī kahata sunata saba samujhata kōya.
baṛē bhāga anurāga rāma sana hōya..63..

63-Tulsidas says that everyone talks about worshipping Lord Ram and having love, devotion, faith and dedication for the Lord, but rarely does anyone implement it. Love and devotion for Sri Ram germinates or arises in one's heart only when one is very fortunate and lucky.

[Tulsidas means that it is too easy to preach about having faith in Lord Ram, about having devotion and love for Lord Ram, but difficult to practice it. The next verse nos. 64-65 are very explicit on this.

It is only when all the accumulated good deeds done by a man begin to show their auspicious results that he is inspired and motivated to worship the Lord and have devotion for him. If it does happen, then that man is extremely lucky and fortunate. Usually a person who becomes eligible to get rewards for his meritorious deeds in life would prefer to such worldly things and material welfare that would showcase his success to the world, satisfy his ego, and fulfill his aspirations in this physical world, but rarely would one wish to have the grand spiritual reward of having love and devotion for the Lord because its benefits are more of a spiritual nature rather than of material nature.

If a person is wise and sagacious enough to know it then surely he will get abiding peace, happiness and bliss for himself; he will be blessed with liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration which would end all his miseries for eternity. His soul would find eternal rest by attaining emancipation and salvation.]

एकहि एक सिखावत जपत न आप ।
तुलसी राम प्रेम कर बाधक पाप ॥64॥

ēkahi ēka sikhāvata japata na āpa.
tulasī rāma prēma kara bādhaka pāpa..64..

64-People teach others to recite Lord Ram's holy name, but they do not do it themselves. Tulsidas says that it is because their sins and past evil deeds create hindrance or obstacles for them. [To wit, the past sins and evil deeds of a man prevents him from chanting the holy name of Lord Ram. This name of the Lord is so holy and pure that impure and unholy can never come near it; they feel terrified of it. So therefore in all sooth and without gainsay, if one truly finds interest in repeating the holy name of Lord Ram and loves the Lord then surely he is a blessed soul.]

[Refer verse no. 63 herein above in this context.]

मरत कहत सब सब कहँ सुमिरहु राम ।
तुलसी अब नहिं जपत समुझि परिनाम ॥65॥

marata kahata saba saba kaham̐ sumirahu rāma.
tulasī aba nahim̐ japata samujhi parināma..65..

65-Tulsidas says that when a person is about to die, all advise him to say Lord Ram's holy name (so that his soul finds eternal peace and deliverance), but the irony is that they don't do it themselves while they are still alive!

[In verse no. 63 we read that it is easy to preach about reciting the holy name of Lord Ram but rarely would one find a person who actually practices what he preaches. Say, how blessed and fortunate that man is who remembers the Lord, who is devoted to him and repeats the Lord's holy name in his life without waiting for the time when others would tell him to do so while he is lying on his death-bed. If the Lord's holy name is so powerful and effective that saying it once at the time of death can liberate the soul, provide it peace and take it across the world of transmigration, then imagine what joy one would have experienced in life if he had done it for a lifetime. Truly indeed, his life would be one that is highly blessed, peaceful and enjoyable; a life that would be a source of happiness for the man as well as an inspiration for others. But it actually does not happen in life because a man remains submerged in worldly activities and forgets about the Lord and his benevolence. If he does remember the Lord then usually it is when he faces some adversities in life and wants a quick-fix for it. Rarely would a man remember the Lord out of pure devotion and love for him.]

All living beings are under the influence of Maya, the forces of delusions that cloud their mind and overshadow all wisdom—and this Maya is so overpowering, reckless and selfish that it prevents the creature from seeing sense; Maya wants to keep the creature trapped in the cycle of birth and death. This is because Maya was created by the Creator as a tool to ensure that the wheel of creation goes on rotating perpetually. If the creature realized the truth and all found liberation and deliverance by leading a pious life, taking the shelter of the holy name of Lord Ram and seeking the Lord's help to find deliverance from the cycle of transmigration for themselves, say then how will this wheel of creation set in motion by the Creator continue to go on and on?]

तुलसी राम नाम जपु आलस छाँडु ।
राम बिमुख कलि काल को भयो न भाँडु ।।66 ।।

tulasī rāma nāma japu ālasa chāṁḍu.
rāma bimukha kali kāla kō bhayō na bhāṁḍu..66..

66-Tulsidas advises that one should discard indolence, lethargy and laxity, and instead be vigilant in repeating Lord Ram's holy name constantly. By being opposed to Lord Ram, who has not been made to wander aimlessly (like a directionless vagrant or a vagabond without a destination) in this world?

[A person who does not have faith and love for Lord Ram is like a child without a parent, or a man without an identity or a nationality. He is like a rudderless ship without a captain, a ship that does not have an anchor either. He just keeps drifting and drifting in life like a log in the high sea of this mundane existence, buffeted and tossed about in a rough and merciless manner. Say, how can such a person ever expect to find peace and happiness and stability in life?]

तुलसी राम नाम सम मित्र न आन ।
जो पहुँचाव राम पुर तनु अवसान ।।67 ।।

tulasī rāma nāma sama mitra na āna.
jō pahumčāva rāma pura tanu avasāna..67..

67-Tulsidas says that there is no other better friend for a person than Lord Sri Ram's holy name which can ferry the soul to the abode of the Lord at the time of the person's death (and liberate him from the cycle of birth and death).

[To wit, Lord Ram is the best friend of all living beings. He cares for all in a selfless manner. The Lord is extremely forgiving, merciful, compassionate, kind, graceful and benevolent. He is always ready to extend a helping hand to a devotee who seeks the Lord's help. But one must beware—that the Lord does not like pretensions, falsehoods, deceit and conceit. One must be honest and truthful in his dealings with the Lord, for otherwise punishment becomes due.]

राम भरोस नाम बल नाम सनेहु ।
जनम जनम रघुनंदन तुलसी देहु ।।68।।

rāma bharōsa nāma bala nāma sanēhu.
janama janama raghunandana tulasī dēhu..68..

68-[Praying to Lord Sri Ram, Tulsidas says—] ‘Oh Raghunandan (Lord Sri Ram)! Give this Tulsidas the assurance that he will get your personal support and protection, and the support and protection of your holy and divine name ‘Ram’, along with having an abiding love and devotion in both (the Lord himself as well as his holy name) in all the future births that he (Tulsidas) might have to take.’

[Refer also to ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 204 where Bharat, the younger brother of Lord Ram who was very devoted and faithful to the Lord, has prayed for the same blessings when he paid his obeisance to the presiding deity of Prayag, the holy pilgrimage site where three holy rivers Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati meet.

The word ‘Raghunandan’ literally means a son of king Raghu’s dynasty. This title is applied to Lord Ram because he was born in this noble family of kings who descended from king Raghu who ruled the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya.

In this verse the saint-poet Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram and expresses his wish that he should be devoted to the Lord and love him from the core of his heart, and treat the Lord as his only friend and benefactor in all the future births he may have to take.

Does this mean that Tulsidas is not sure of his liberation and deliverance inspite of having deep devotion for the Lord in his current life? No, it’s not that; he simply implies that if by chance his sins, that he may have accumulated inadvertently in his current life, perforce him to take another birth then his prayers to Lord Ram would come in handy for him, for now it would be the Lord’s responsibility to ensure that Tulsidas remains devoted to him in his new birth and lives a pious life fully devoted to the Lord so that finally he finds liberation and deliverance for himself at the end of that birth or subsequent birth.

This idea is continued in the next verse no. 69 also.]

जनम जनम जहँ जहँ तनु तुलसिहि देहु ।
तहँ तहँ राम निबाहिब नाथ सनेहु ।।69।।

janama janama jaham̐ jaham̐ tanu tulasihī dēhu.
 taham̐ taham̐ rāma nibāhiba nātha sanēhu..69..

69-[Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram. He says—] ‘Oh Lord, in whichever form you (i.e. the Supreme Creator, Lord Ram) make this Tulsidas take birth again in this world, I beseech you most earnestly oh my dear Lord that you should uphold your promise of having love, endearment and affection for me for all times to come, and therefore make sure that I have your benevolence and love in the new life the way I have it in this current life.’

[This is a sort of concluding thanksgiving note by Tulsidas. He acknowledges that Lord Ram is merciful to him and loves him too. So Tulsidas prays to the Lord to keep him under his wings in his next birth too so that he does not have to worry about anything. Who knows what tricks Maya (the delusion-creating powers of the Creator) may play on him so that he becomes deluded like other living beings, and under the influence of Maya he may forget the Lord. So in a way Tulsidas plays his hands safe by praying to Lord Ram that it is he, the Lord, who has to ensure that Tulsidas remains safe and sound even in his next birth.]

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Appendix—1

A brief life-sketch of Goswami Tulsidas

One of the greatest saints, poets, philosophers and blessed souls known to us is Goswami Tulsidas. This saint, born in India in the 16th century, was a great devotee of Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being. Tulsidas was not an ordinary poet or saint; he was an apostle of the Lord sent especially on this earth to spread the message of love, devotion and faith for the Supreme Being in the form of Sri Ram, a form that the common man could easily relate to and understand. Tulsidas propagated the divine story of Lord Ram and made the Lord's holy Name a household name through his writings, thereby making spiritual liberation and deliverance easily available to the common man, and bringing the Supreme Being nearer to him and his heart than ever before.

His message of having love, devotion, faith and submission for Lord Ram as a way to find eternal liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death, as a means of finding freedom from the formidable shackle of miseries and torments that constantly harass a creature in this deluding world in which all the living beings find themselves trapped, and to obtain emancipation and salvation for their souls which would lead to their ultimate and final peace, tranquility and blissful rest, was heartily accepted and welcomed by the masses for its simplicity of approach, and for the freedom that it provided them from elaborate rituals and formalities as ordained in the ancient scriptures which the common man found extremely difficult, impractical and cumbersome to follow.

While the original scriptures were written in the classical language of India, known as Sanskrit, that was limited to the higher and learned classes, therefore making these scriptures beyond the reach of the common man, Tulsidas wrote in the local dialect known as Avadhi, which is a branch of the main language known as Hindi that is spoken throughout the central planes of India. It was the language of the masses, and therefore the writings of Tulsidas became instantly understandable, accessible and dear to the populace.

He wrote about the divine story of Lord Ram in a poetical style that fluently employed the various Raagas (tones, metres and notes) of Indian classical music as well as folk music. This immediately was acceptable by the people as compared to the chanting of the hymns in a staccato manner, or discourses that were dry and boring for the masses. After a hard day's toil, a common man found rejuvenation and refreshment when he sang a part of Tulsidas' verses rather than hear or read some long-winding discourse telling him about some distant and unknown God.

So we come to the next important contribution of Tulsidas in the field of spiritualism and religion. Through his writings he spread the message that having love, devotion, faith and submission for Lord Ram, who is no one else but incarnate Supreme Being known as Parmeshwar, the Supreme Ishwar, and the Lord God, is the easiest and

most convenient method for finding Mukti (liberation and deliverance), Shanti (peace and tranquility), Shukha (happiness and joy) and Anand (bliss).

For achieving this aim the individual needed only to inculcate the habit of constantly remembering the Lord and focusing his mind on him and his holy Name, a method which the scriptures defined as Yoga. While Yoga was complicated, cumbersome, time consuming and aimed at an abstract form of God, the philosophy of Bhakti (love, devotion, dedication for the Supreme Being) as propagated by Tulsidas centered on Lord Ram as the Divinity personified, the Lord whose divine form and mystical deeds were easily documented and readable, making them understandable and within reach of the common man. This methodology brought this same hitherto abstract God extremely near to the common man, and made the God dear to him. The method of story-telling and singing the Lord's glories through melodious verses and hymns instantly struck an emotional and lovable common cord with the individual who now felt that Mukti and spiritual Shanti was not only limited to the high and the mighty as their exclusive prerogative, but he has also the same right over them.

It is obvious that any person can easily relate to an event or a personality which is common to his own experience and knowledge of the world he is acquainted with, rather than some divine Being who is intractable, unknown, invisible and living in a world beyond the wildest of one's imagination. So the net effect was that the Supreme Being was made accessible, approachable and available to the common man by saint Tulsidas through his writings, and the philosophy of Bhakti (devotion, dedication, love, faith, submission, constant remembrance etc.) that they preached.

The books and philosophy of Tulsidas dedicated to having 'Bhakti' for Lord Ram as an infallible remedy for all spiritual and worldly ills and misfortunes have spread like wild-fire amongst the masses, making him more popular than any other single poet or author of the land. This singular fact that the acclaim and respect that Tulsidas has generated down the centuries, which no one else has managed to match, vouches for the greatness of his writings, the deep import of the message of spiritualism and love for the Supreme God that they contain, the correctness and the truthfulness of his approach and preaching, and the especial blessedness of his soul.

There was one more big benefit and reward to humanity from the books of Tulsidas. The society was presented with the noble and ideal character of a king known as 'Ram' whose exemplary life and highly correct conduct set a bench-mark for others to emulate themselves and teach others to follow. It showed man that when the Supreme Being became a human being, he himself had to undergo all the throes of pain and sufferings as well as bouts of joys and happiness that all of them have experienced in their own lives to a lesser or greater degree. But in spite of all these ups and downs of life, Lord Ram maintained the highest level of moral and emotional standards as prescribed by the scriptures. This is therefore possible for them—all members of the society—to do.

After all, there have been hundreds and thousands of great kings, emperors, conquerors and rulers in this world, and all had faithful bards lauding their achievements in glorious and colourful terms—but all faded away on the sand of time; none of them are called 'God'. It is only Lord Ram who is eternally remembered as the saviour and the redeemer, so obviously there must be a difference between him and the rest. So by following the path walked by Lord Ram himself as narrated by Tulsidas, the individual

man can be sure that he is following the best path that can be followed in his life. In other words, the common man had a practical and handy guide to show him the correct and the righteous way during the course of his routine life and his dealings with this mundane and humdrum world—this is another great contribution of Tulsidas and his writings.

So we see how the Supreme Lord of this creation has used this great apostle and messenger of his, i.e. saint Goswami Tulsidas, to help the creatures of this creation, the subjects of the loving God's vast realm, come closer to their dear Lord and find their ultimate redemption by the easiest path that can be made available to them in this world of fast-paced life, contradictory and confusing doctrines, lack of proper spiritual guidance, and moral degradation.

The books of Tulsidas are like pitchers full of ambrosia for finding eternal peace of the mind and the heart. Just like fish feels refreshed when submerged in water, the soul of the individual person would feel refreshed and rejuvenated by keeping its self submerged in the nectar of Lord's love and devotion by way of singing and remembering the divine deeds and stories associated with Lord Ram who is a known and a visible incarnation of the Supreme Being as narrated and sung by the great Tulsidas.

Now, let us read about Goswami Tulsidas' life and works.

Since great saints and sages did not wish themselves to be praised but preferred that their Lord be praised and worshipped instead, so therefore Tulsidas wrote next to nothing about himself. All accounts of his life are available from contemporary accounts and circumstantial evidences as well as analysis of his writings by modern scholars and researchers. Thus, certain controversies and distractions are bound to exist, but here we shall read the most accepted version of this saint's life and works.

Goswami Tulsidas was born in the Hindu year Samvat 1589, corresponding to 1532 A.D. His birth place is known as Rajapur (pronounced as *Raajaapur*). This is a small hamlet in the central part of India, and it is located in the district of Banda near the city of Allahabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The day of the birth was the Hindu day of Sraawan Shukla Saptami which corresponds roughly to the seventh day of the bright lunar fortnight in the fifth Hindu month known as Sraawan that falls in late July to mid August.

The time of his birth is believed to be very inauspicious—it was an asterism known as Mula that was on the ascent at that time. This period is called 'Abhuktamula', and it is said that a child born under this asterism brings death to its parents.

The child himself was very odd—he was born after full twelve month in the mother's womb, and at the time of his birth he had the full complement of teeth.

This frightened the parents out of their wits. The only way was to either abandon the child or not look at his face for eight long years.

His parents were extremely poor Brahmins. His father was Atma-ram Dubey, and his mother was Hulsī. [According to some accounts, the surname of his father was 'Shukla' instead of 'Dubey'.] As destined, his mother Hulsī died on the fifth day of his birth. The father was heart-broken and overcome with superstition. He abandoned the child.

The midwife who had delivered the child was named Muniya. Her mother-in-law was named Chuniya. It was this kind lady who took care of the abandoned child and fed

him. As ill fate would have it, Chuniya too died when the child was six years old. His father refused to accept him and so the child was made an orphan!

The mother was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to worship the sacred Tulsi plant regularly. So, the family guru or the family priest called the child 'Tulsi'. This was his first name.

There is another version which says that the family priest of the child was himself known as Tulsidas, and he gave the child the name of 'Tularam' (pronounced as Tulaaraam). It was abbreviated to 'Tulsi'.

Anyhow, when the child was forced to fend for himself at the age of six years as outlined above, he went from door to door begging for food, and as his signal call to announce his coming and request the household to give him alms he used to say aloud 'Ram'. So the people began to call him 'Ram-bola'—literally meaning someone who says or calls out Ram.

The Supreme Lord of the world has his own mysterious ways, and when he selects someone to fulfill his divine mandate and become his apostle, the Lord takes full charge of his life. All great souls are born like ordinary human beings—no one drops from air like rain—and it is what they do later on in life, what they give to the society, what mankind learns from them and how it benefits from their teachings, their message and their legacy is what that really matters, and it is what that makes them stand out as a colossus and a tall landmark on the landscape of humanity.

And so it happened that a saint named Narhari-das, a descendant of the great seer and sage named Ramanand, had a vision (dream) that he must pick up a helpless child who was orphaned and abandoned by the world, and instruct him about the divine story of Lord Ram. Narhari-das spotted the poor boy and took him under his wings, developing a special affinity with him because of the divine order.

Narhari-das took the boy called Ram-bola to Ayodhya and performed his sacred thread ceremony. It was on this occasion that Ram-bola was rechristened as 'Tulsi-ram'. The two—Narhari-das and Tulsiram—lived for about ten months at Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Ram and the capital of his kingdom during the Lord's sojourn on earth. Even during this short stay, the boy was completely enthralled by the immortal story of the Lord which he used to hear in rapt attention at a number of places where it was traditionally said and repeated in this holy town. The hidden spark of divinity and holiness as well as the fire of love for his beloved Lord Ram that lay hidden in his bosom and concealed in his heart got its first puff of rejuvenation here, and this hitherto concealed fire was later on to become a raging all-engulfing fire of total submission for his beloved Lord Ram, a fire of unquestioned and undiluted love and devotion as well as the unstoppable longing for attaining Lord Ram that not only overtook the entire being of Tulsidas alone but it also swept across the length and breadth of the land.

Narhari-das took Tulsiram to a place called 'Sukar-kshetra' that is near Ayodhya at the confluence of the rivers Saryu and Ghagra. Here they lived for the next five years.

Another learned man named Shesha Sanaatan came visiting, and he took Tulsiram with him to Varanasi, a holy city traditionally held as the center of learning and education in the classics and languages from ancient times. It was here that Tulsiram was re-named 'Tulsidas' by his new guru Sanaatan.

At Varanasi Tulsidas learnt Sanskrit language and its grammar. He was introduced to literature devoted to the theme closest to his heart—the theme of Lord

Ram. He read the versions of the Lord's story as narrated by sages Valmiki and Veda Vyas, as well as the various Purans and other ancient texts. Tulsidas literally gulped down these texts like a hungry man partaking of delicious food for the first time in his life. He was extremely bright and mastered the finer nuances of the language and the ancient texts.

Gradually his name and fame spread as an eligible bachelor who was an expert teacher and a scholar par-excellence. He used to teach and preach the Purans and the versions of the Ramayana, and earned his livelihood as well as renown. A Brahmin family of the Bharadwaj lineage lived in a village known as Taarpita which was across the river Yamuna from Tulsidas' ancestral village of Rajapur. The head of the family was a Brahmin named Deen Bandhu Paathak. He had a beautiful daughter named Ratnawali (Ratnaawali). When he heard about the great name and fame of Tulsidas he married his daughter Ratnawali to him.

Tulsidas and Rathawali had a son named 'Tarapati' (*Taaraapati*). But unfortunately the child died early in infancy. Besides this single tragedy, Tulsidas' married life was otherwise happily spent for fifteen years. Tulsidas loved his wife passionately and he could not think of ever living without her even for a day.

Now let us see how the remarkable change came into his life—a change that turned this scholarly household man who used to spend his days like an ordinary scholarly person giving discourses and preaching the scriptures and earning his livelihood into a legend even during his lifetime, someone who left us a legacy of Bhakti and Mukti that are easily accessible, as well as a rich heritage of devotional literature of exceptional beauty and charm like the world has never seen before.

There are two versions of the incident that was the turning point in his life, and which made this hitherto passionate man renounce the world completely along with all its attractions, and instead devote the rest of his life in total submission to his beloved Lord Ram, a life of total submersion in the ocean of love and devotion for Lord Ram who was the beloved of his soul.

The first version is as follows. It happened that once his brother-in-law came visiting the household of Tulsidas. Tulsidas had to go out on some assignment to preach the Purans for eleven days. So his wife Ratnawali took his permission and went with her brother to her parent's home, promising to come back before Tulsidas returns. But when he came back from his assignment he found that she hadn't come. So enamoured was Tulsidas with his wife that he could not wait for her arrival, and he set out forthwith to his in-law's place. It was night and the river Yamuna was in spate, but Tulsidas didn't have patience left in him. So he caught hold of a floating corpse and crossed over to the other side. When he reached his in-law's place, he got due respect, but Ratnawali was shocked and dismayed at his behaviour; she felt embarrassed at his conduct and thought that people in her village would start passing lurid and lascivious comments when they come to hear the developments the next morning. Besides this, she wished good for her husband's spiritual welfare because she was no ordinary woman. She thought to her self that her husband had been teaching and preaching the scriptures for so long a time but had not understood any tiny bit of their meaning. So she scolded him when they were alone. The essence of what she said is this—'Look. The amount of love and passion that you have for me and my body made of bones and flesh, how wonderful would it have

been if you had even half of it for Lord Ram whom you preach about, who has taken care of you when no one else bothered, and who fills your stomach even now.'

Tulsidas' eyes of wisdom opened instantly. He got up and retraced his steps immediately. Ratnawali was again shocked. She did not mean that her husband would abandon her. Her scolding was supposed to be a normal tiff between a wife and a husband, and was nothing as serious as it turned out to be.

Anyway, Tulsidas turned away from this humdrum life once and for all. Broken and devastated, Ratnawali lived thereafter like a hermitress, spending some time in her maternal village and sometime in the village of her brother-in-law named Nanda-das. It is believed that she composed 201 Dohas, two-line verses having devotional and spiritual tone. She died in Samvat 1651 (A.D. 1594).

According to the other version, when Tulsidas reached his in-law's house, all were asleep. He caught hold a serpent to climb the boundary wall, thinking the serpent to be a rope, and called out the people inside to open the gates. All woke up, but Ratnawali was extremely peeved and she scolded Tulsidas in the manner described above.

Moving out for ever, Tulsidas went on a pilgrimage to all the sacred places, and finally settled down in Varanasi. He was already well-known here as a scholar and a great devotee of the Lord. Tulsidas began spending his time preaching the texts of the Sanskrit versions of the Ramayana but thought to himself that he better write the divine story of Lord Ram in the local dialect for the benefit of the masses. Again, he decided that it was the best form of meditation and contemplation for him which will have a two-pronged benefit—one was that his days and time would be spent constructively in remaining submerged in the thoughts of his beloved Lord Ram, and second he would leave behind a legacy that would generate devotion, dedication and love for the Lord in the heart of the coming generations down the ages. He realised that the story of Lord Ram was till that time in Sanskrit, a language of the scholars and not of the common man, so there was the great need of speaking and writing in the common man's language so that the Lord's story became easily readable and understandable by him. Thus, by his writings Tulsidas brought Lord Ram and his divine name closer home and nearer to every ordinary household, every single individual on the land.

It is said that the local people of Varanasi recognized his scholarship and he was made an Abbott of a monastery, known as a Mattha. It was this appointment that bestowed the title 'Goswami' upon him because it is a title of honour. The word also means someone who has learnt to exercise control over the sense organs. This Mattha came to be known as the 'Tulsidas Mattha', but by Samvat 1848 (A.D. 1791) it was renamed as 'Sthaan Tulsidas'.

Tulsidas wrote for approximately 50-60 years of his life. Amongst his contemporary poets and saints with whom he came in contact are the following—Surdas, Nanda-das, Mirabai and Keshav-das. It is also known that a Muslim chieftain named Abdur-rahim Khaan-khaana, who was a governor and administrator of Varanasi, and a rich Hindu landlord named Todarmal were greatly influenced by Tulsidas and had great respect for him.

There is a popular legend associated with Tulsidas. We shall cite some of the well known ones here.

There was a criminal who would call out 'in the name of Ram, give alms to this murderer'. Tulsidas was so delighted and overwhelmed when he would hear the name of

this beloved Ram being called out that he would take this criminal to his austere place and share whatever food he had with him. This of course led to great scorn and anger amongst the orthodox Brahmins who demanded an explanation from Tulsidas. He told them that once this man has said 'Ram' all his sins were wiped away. Infuriated further, the Brahmins said that if he had this much faith in the Lord and if what he said is the truth then he must prove it. The test was that if the stone bull placed in a Shiva temple would eat from the hands of the criminal it would be proved that what Tulsidas said was correct, otherwise they would castrate him from the society. On the designated day, to the wonder of all assembled to watch the spectacle, the stone bull actually ate from the hands of the criminal!

This made his tormentors more jealous of him. They hired a professional thief and told him to enter his house in the night and steal his manuscripts. When the thief came in he found Tulsidas sleeping blissfully but two young boys, with bow and arrow in hand, were guarding his house. They were Lord Ram and Laxman themselves. The thief beat a hasty retreat out of fear for his life, and then become Tulsidas' great admirer.

The continued harassment of Tulsidas made him appeal to Lord Hanuman, the most beloved devotee of Lord Ram and himself a manifestation of Lord Shiva, to help him. Hanuman asked Tulsidas in a dream to write a prayerful petition to Lord Ram seeking the Lord's intervention. It is believed that these prayers turned out to be the text of the book 'Vinai Patrika' that Tulsidas wrote.

There is another fascinating legend related to his life. It says that everyday after his morning ablutions Tulsidas would pour some water at the base of the holy banyan tree. A spirit that lived on that tree and suffered due to some mistakes of the past evil deeds was able to quench its thirst and heard the divine name of Ram which Tulsidas would utter while pouring water. The spirit was absolved of its sins and found liberation. So it blessed Tulsidas and told him that he can have a wish fulfilled. Tulsidas wanted a Darshan (holy sight) of his beloved Ram, and so he asked for this boon. The spirit told him that an old beggar-like man attends his discourses everyday; he comes first, sits at the back of the congregation, and is the last to leave. He would help Tulsidas to meet Ram. Next day, Tulsidas found him out and caught hold of his legs—beseeching him to make him see Ram. This old man was no one else but Lord Hanuman in disguise.

He advised Tulsidas that he should go to Chitrakoot, a place amongst the mountains where Lord Ram had spent the earlier part of his forest exile, and there he will have a Darshan of the Lord. Tulsidas went to Chitrakoot and made it his habit to first take a bath in the river there and then prepare a paste of sandalwood that he would apply to his own forehead and to those devotees who came to take a bath in the river, saying the name of Ram each time. Shortly after his coming, one day Lord Ram appeared before him and asked him to give some sandalwood paste and apply it on the Lord's forehead. Not only this, the Lord applied the paste to Tulsidas' forehead with his own hands. What more would Tulsidas want! He got the fruit of his life. He became ecstatic and immediately went into a trance-like state of extreme bliss known as Samadhi that is said to have lasted for the next three days.

There is a verse commemorating this event. It is as follows—

चित्रकूट के घाट पर भई संतन की भीड़ ।

तुलसीदास चंदन घिसें तिलक देत रघुवीर ॥

It means ‘On the banks of a river in Chitrakoot, there is a crowd of saints and holy people. Tulsidas is rubbing sandalwood to make a paste, and Raghubir (Lord Ram) uses this paste to make the mark of the Tilak on their foreheads.’ [The Tilak is a sign consisting of three parallel horizontal lines that are made on the forehead of devotees of Lord Vishnu using paste of sandalwood.]

Once he had gone to Vrindavan to visit the holy sites associated with Lord Krishna. In the main temple there he addressed the presiding deity and sang that he would bow his head only if the Lord holds a bow and arrow (like Lord Ram). It is said that immediately, to the amazement of all present, the idol of Lord Krishna was seen holding a bow and arrow. Tulsidas fell down like a rod to pay his obeisance to his beloved Lord Ram who had revealed there and then on the altar. There is a subtle message in this incident—that all forms of the Lord are the same, whether it is the form known as Lord Krishna or the form known as Lord Ram. What one needs to see his beloved Lord everywhere in this creation is love, devotion, dedication, conviction, faith and sincerity that are deep and truthful—if these qualities are there, the Lord is also there.

There is one more episode of historical authenticity that is worth recounting here. It is believed that the Mughal Emperor Jahangir had heard of the mystical powers of Tulsidas. When he met Tulsidas once, he asked him to show some miracle. Tulsidas refused, saying that he knew no black magic, and the only thing he knew was the name of ‘Ram’. This obviously angered the emperor, who was not accustomed to such blunt replies, so he ordered that Tulsidas be imprisoned. ‘Let me see how your Ram saves you now,’ rebuked Jahangir. It is believed that a fierce bunch of monkeys attacked the fort and the prison, wreaking havoc all around. Jahangir realised that Tulsidas was not an ordinary man, and he relented. He not only released Tulsidas from prison but gave him gifts in the form of gold and silver coins. It is a belief that Tulsidas used that money to build Hanuman’s temple at Varanasi with moulded the Lord’s image his own hands.

Tulsidas left his mortal coil (body) in Varanasi on the banks of the holy river Ganges at the Assi Ghat. The day was Sraavan Shukla Saptami of Samvat 1680 (A.D. 1623). According to another account, the day was Sraavan Badi Teej, and this day is regarded as more authentic because it is followed as the death anniversary of Tulsidas by the descendants of Todarmal who regard Tulsidas as their Guru. [Shukla Saptami is the seventh day of the bright half of the lunar month, while Badi Teej is the third day of the dark half. Sraawan is the fifth Hindu month falling roughly between end of July and mid of August.]

Tulsidas was exceptional and unique because he was an enlightened soul especially empowered by the Holy Spirit of the Lord himself to spread the message of love and devotion for the Lord as a means of attaining spiritual purity, peace and bliss alongside the opportunity of attaining emancipation and salvation for the individual’s soul, known as the Atma. Tulsidas adopted the simplified method of remembering the Lord through the medium of the Lord’s deeds in this world. This helped Tulsidas to ever remain submerged in the thoughts of Lord Ram, and to keep his mind focused on the Divinity and away from this deluding world and its entangling spiritual mess. This is what the essence of Yoga is—to remain focused on the ‘Truth’ and exclude all that is the ‘untruth’.

This was a form of meditation and contemplation for Tulsidas; it helped him to divert his mind from the affairs of the mundane world around him and focus it instead on the Divine Being who lived in this external world as Lord Ram and as the Atma, the pure conscious soul, in his inner self. This is also the focus of Yoga, the established and scripturally sanctified way of establishing a union between the individual's soul known as the Atma, and the Supreme Soul of this creation known as the Parmatma. A profound resonance is created when the vibrations of the individual soul begin to correspond with the cosmic vibrations generated by the Supreme Soul, and this leads to what the scriptures recognize as the state of bliss and Samadhi, the state of perpetual ecstasy and bliss.

The reason for his continuously writing so many versions of the same story of Lord Ram in so many different ways—e.g. Ram Charit Manas, Kavitawali, Geetawali, Barvai Ramayan, Vinai Patrika, Dohawali—is that he used this method as a means of meditation on the Supreme Being in his visible form as Lord Ram, and repeating the Lord's holy name as much as possible by continuously writing on this theme as a means of contemplation and fixing his mind on the Divinity instead of anything related to the physical world of material objects. This was a profound form of Yoga for him as it helped him to establish a communion of his soul with the Supreme Soul represented by Lord Ram.

This is what Tulsidas subtly taught us—to become eternally blissful by remaining engrossed in the thoughts of the Divinity that is bliss personified, and enjoy the happiness that comes with the realisation that the Supreme Lord, our protector and redeemer, is not only always with us but also exceptionally easy to access without any hassle and formality. And the tool for this achievement is to keep the Lord eternally in our mind and heart by keeping them submerged in his thoughts. This is easily done by reading, hearing, telling and discussing about the Lord's divine story in all its myriad variations and colourful versions.

In order to achieve this end, Tulsidas wrote prolifically on the theme of Lord Ram as an incarnation of Divinity, as the Supreme Being living himself in our midst in the form of Lord Ram's holy story!

One great benefit of this approach was that his entire life and time was spent in the form of one huge Yoga, done continuously and unbroken. He did not remain satisfied by writing one book, say the Ram Charit Manas, but wrote three other books to narrate the same story—these are the Kavitawali and the Geetawali. These two books supplemented and complimented the epic story which was narrated in the Ram Charit Manas. There were certain events in the epic life of Lord Ram that the great soul Tulsidas wished to add more colour and vibrancy to, so he decided to mould them in the form of music and song. A song that is sung melodiously is more heart warming and heart touching than mere narration of events no matter how beautifully they have been narrated. So he wrote the Kavitawali and the Geetawali—both these narrate the same story of Lord Ram's life and deeds but in a pattern that is set to different 'Raagas' which are musical notes, metres and tones of classical Indian music. It is practically observed in our day to day life that one can easily recall some song, sing it comfortably and hum its musical tune more easily as compared to reciting some regular text of a classical book.

The books of Tulsidas—As has been noted above, Tulsidas spent his life preaching, teaching and writing about his beloved Lord Ram. The following books are universally regarded as being written by him. The list is according to the year and period of his life when he wrote them.

1. Vairaagya Sandipani—it was written roughly between Samvat 1626 and 1627 (A.D. 1569-70).
2. Ram-agya-prashna—it was written roughly between Samvat 1627 and 1628 (A.D. 1570-71).
3. Ram-lalaa Nahachhu—it was written roughly between Samvat 1628 and 1629 (A.D. 1571-72).
4. Janki Mangal—it was written roughly between Samvat 1629 and 1630 (A.D. 1572-73).
5. Ram Charit Manas—the writing of this great epic was started in Samvat 1631 (A.D. 1574)---but the date of conclusion is not determined.
6. Parvati Mangal—again, it was started in Samvat 1643 (A.D. 1586)---the date of conclusion is not determined.
7. Geetawali (Ram Geetawali)—it was written roughly between Samvat 1630 and 1670 (A.D. 1573-1613).
8. Vinai Patrika—it was written roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1679 (A.D. 1574-1622).
9. Dohawali—it was written roughly between Samvat 1626 and 1680 (A.D. 1569-1623).
10. Varvai Ramayan—it was written roughly between Samvat 1630 and 1680 (A.D. 1573-1623).
11. Kavitalawali—it was written roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1680 (A.D. 1574-1623).
12. Hanuman Baahuk—it was written roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1680 (A.D. 1574-1623).
13. Krishna Geetawali—it was written roughly between Samvat 1643 and 1660 (A.D. 1586-1603).

Now, let us very briefly glance at what these thirteen books are about. Tulsidas' magnum opus is unquestionably the Ram Charit Manas. It is the most revered and sacred text, known universally as the Ramayana, which is the narrative of the divine story of the life and times of Lord Ram who was the incarnate Supreme Being on earth. It is universally regarded as the bench-mark for the narrative of the holy story of Lord Ram.

The Geetawali and Kavitalawali are variations of the Ramayana as they also describe the divine story of Lord Ram but use the different Raagas (notes, metres and tones) of classical music of India to narrate the different events in Lord Ram's life.

The Barvai Ramayan is also another such book which narrates the story of Lord Ram, but it is shorter than the above two books. It uses two-line verses called Barvai Chand instead of the Raagas.

The Dohawali is a compilation of two-line couplets dealing with a host of topics covering ethics, morality, proper ways of conduct and behaviour, matters concerning society and politics, daily problems of life and how to cope with them, and of course the theme of having reliance on the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram for being assured of all-round wellbeing and welfare.

The Vairagya Sandipani is a short work like the Barvai Ramayan, and it highlights the characters and virtuousness of those who have renounced all attractions of the material world and have completely surrendered themselves to Lord Ram, thereby developing the virtues that make a man a true saint and holy.

The Janki Mangal and Parvati Mangal are two books that describe the marriage of Lord Ram with Sita and Lord Shiva with Parvati in a poetic style laced with devotion and affection for the respective Lord. The verses of these two books were traditionally recited during marriage ceremonies in Indian homes as auspicious charms that brought happiness and wellbeing to the newly wed couples.

In this genre falls the other short book called Ram Lalaa Nachu. It pertains to a ceremony that is part of the overall marriage rituals in Indian homes. During this, the head and the beard of the groom are shaved and his nails cut before the actual marriage begins. It is usually done just before the marriage party starts for the venue of the marriage rituals. The book describes this ceremony for Lord Ram prior to his marriage with Sita. It is meant to complement Janki Mangal.

The Hanuman Baahuk was written by Tulsidas towards the end of his life when he suffered from severe attack of pain in his arms ('Baahu'). He prays to Lord Hanuman to relieve him of this agony. It is believed that Tulsidas was cured of this disease after he prayed to Hanuman using the hymns of this book.

And finally we have the Krishna Geetawali. It so happened that another great saint named Surdas, who was his contemporary, had a friendly exchange with Tulsidas, saying that he did not know that Ram and Krishna were the same Divinity in two forms. Surdas was perhaps referring to incident when Tulsidas didn't bow before the image of Lord Krishna when he visited Vrindavan till the Lord held a bow and an arrow.

To prove that it was not so, that he only loved the image of the Lord with the bow and arrow though he knew that there is no difference between Ram and Krishna, Tulsidas wrote Krishna Geetawali that describes the holy story of Lord Krishna. Not to be outdone, Surdas did the same in the reverse order—that is, though he was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna, he wrote a book titled 'Ram Charitawali' that describes the story of Lord Ram just like Tulsidas' Krishna Charitawali that describes the story of Lord Krishna.

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Appendix—2

About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
- (b) www.pothi.com (in 'paper-back book' + 'e-book' versions),
- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) Kobo, (iv) Page Foundry, (v) Scribd, (vi) Tolino etc.:-

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala

Nahachu” & “Geetawali”, and sage Veda Vyas’ book “Adhyatma Ramayan”; (14) “Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram”; (15) “Vairagya Shatkam” of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) “Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan” or the “Aadi Ramayan” based on Tulsidas’ Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) “Narad Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitaawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitaawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]

2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.

3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.

4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.

5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

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Ansari Road, Darayaganj, Delhi—110002.

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(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas' is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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